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EXTENDED FORMS: THE USE OF MYTH IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH CANADIAN POETRY

by

© JANIS KATHRYN WATKIN

A THESIS

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For my mother and in memory of my father

ABSTRACT

Through an examination of Jay Macpherson's The Boatman, Gwendolyn MacEwen's The Armies of the Moon, Margaret Atwood's The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Michael Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, and George Bowering's Genève, this thesis investigates how these modern and contemporary English Canadian poets use particular techniques that encourage readers to understand each of these volumes as a single extended form.

Chapter I defines what it is about myth that allows poets to use it to control and contain the multiple perspectives offered by a series of poems. Myth provides a structural principle which adds to and progressively accumulates meaning from otherwise unrelated metaphors, images, and symbols.

Chapter II argues that Macpherson's attempt to reproduce one of the major themes of myth (the cycle of birth, death and rebirth) through form (a quest requiring a strong narrative thread) is dominated by an artifactual sense of myth. Although her narrative and her content depend on mythic allusions, the relationship between the narrative and the mythological symbols in individual poems is difficult to discern.

Chapter III argues that The Armies of the Moon conveys a sense of myth enacted. MacEwen's personal, inward journey, which is framed by a physical journey to the moon, makes use not only of references from Classical myth and from religion, but also of the blurring of boundaries between categories and the suspension of linear time which the methods of

myth make possible. MacEwen illustrates how the methods of myth continue to enable the exploration of what man cannot otherwise accept, comprehend, or master.

Chapter IV argues that through a combination of documents and the articulation of a voice which Atwood kept overhearing when she read Moodie's books, Atwood creates a Canadian myth in which she duplicates mythic themes and plots through making Moodie's actions repeat the actions of her classical counterparts, Persephone, and the Triple Goddess.

Chapter V argues that in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid Ondaatje simultaneously perpetuates Billy's status as outlaw hero while endowing him with artistic abilities which together change the Kid from legendary hero to paradigmatic representative of the artist-outsider. Ondaatje makes extensive use of documents, articulates Billy's voice (a voice which was missing in the documents), and adopts a fragmented time scheme to help him create the myth of the artist-outsider.

Chapter VI argues that in Genève Bowering's use of myth as a structural principle is determined by his use of the Tarot which visually captures the traditional characters from and situations of myth. Yet, because Bowering denies knowledge of the meanings of the symbols on each card, the full impact and meaning of the cards, and by implication the myths which the cards represent, are not realized.

Chapter VII summarizes Macpherson's, MacEwen's, Atwood's, Ondaatje's, and Bowering's use of myth as a structural principle and suggests the impact on Canadian poetry that the use of extended forms has had and will continue to have.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Even if critics concede that titles for works of verse may be more capricious or arbitrary than for most books, they must also recognize that many modern and contemporary English Canadian poets have chosen titles meant to help unify their published collections, titles meant to indicate something of the process, topic, or definition which the individual poems in the volume jointly explore. This unifying intention is further indicated by a deliberate ordering of the poems, one which suggests the poet's hope that the reader will come to consider individual poems as interacting parts of the whole, and ultimately that he will regard each volume as a single extended form. The resulting demands make something of a paradox for the reader; he is asked to see each individual poem both as complete in itself and as a working part of a larger "poem." Such demands are not simple; they are not, for example, comparable to understanding the conventions which make a sentence complete and yet also part of a paragraph. Insofar as a volume offers a series of discrete, complete poems, its author attempts to engage the reader in multiple perspectives, forcing him to look from several different angles of vision. But insofar as the collected poems are meant to interact, to focus these ways of looking on a single object, these multiple perspectives are often controlled by or contained within the poet's use of what can be called a comprehensive myth. If the use of myth is truly comprehensive, that is, successful, it provides a deep-working structural principle which can add

to and progressively accumulate meaning from otherwise unrelated metaphors, images, and symbols. If the reader can be made aware of this balance of multiple perspectives and comprehensive myth, then the paradox nears resolution, or, more precisely, the reader acquires new conventions for appreciating the poem both as complete in itself and as a functioning integral of a larger whole.

The frequency with which modern and contemporary English Canadian poets have chosen to try to unify single volumes by means of myth suggests to this critic that something, as yet unspecified, in myth facilitates its use as a structural principle. But my search for a definition applicable to myths encountered in this literature has been frustrated or at least enormously complicated by modern scholars' division of myth into specialized areas of study. Attempts to do justice to these divisions invite the critic to eclecticism, but this hospitable effort to be fully catholic is strained by the sheer volume and variety of explorations precipitated by modern interest in myth.

Major problems thus arise from difficulties in limiting and defining the field. The sciences of anthropology and psychology do assist in the limitation and definition of the field, but their discriminative emphases and applications complicate rather than simplify the uses and functions of myth in literature to the point where single definitions which evolve from studies in these fields are not applicable to discussions of the use of myth in literature. Further, the anthropologist's frequent insistence that "true" myth has its origins in ritual and that all other tales are to be considered literary myth, legend, saga, or folktale is problematical to the literary critic who usually does not distinguish pre-literary myth from myth as it is interpreted, allegorized, or

transformed in ancient literature.

While the anthropologist believes that genuine myth must have its origins in ritual practice, the psychologist is more intent on the development of particular themes and plots which define man's relationship to himself, to other men, and to society. The psychologist tends to explain actions and even formulates basic theories of the unconscious and dreams by suggesting analogies between modern man's actions and stories or myths from more primitive societies.[1] Psychology, with its probings into the unconscious mind, has, more than any other science, succeeded in shaping modern response to myth to the extent that the twentieth-century reader finds it difficult to distinguish myth as a reflective social or psychological medium from myth as a deliberate poetic symbol or metaphor. Obviously, neither the anthropological nor the psychological approach to myth offers sufficient enlightenment to the literary critic. Despite his distaste, however, for the extra-literary considerations of such specialized studies, the critic needs to understand them; any definition of myth that ignores them will be prima facie partial and self-serving.

For these reasons, I have found Lillian Feder's book Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry particularly helpful in understanding the nature of myth and its uses. Professor Feder ranges freely among the specialized sources; there are chapters devoted to the psychoanalysis of Freud and Jung, to rite as social expression (Frazer's The Golden Bough), and to a cyclic view of history as represented by Vico and Spengler. More than this, the inclusiveness implied in defining myth eclectically is suggested by Feder's attempt to "develop a definition of myth as a continuous and evolving mode of expression, and to indicate how myth functions . . . as an aesthetic device which reaches into the deepest layers of personal,

religious, social, and political life."[2]

The flexibility and sophistication which come from borrowing freely from various sources are necessary if the adoption and the adaptation of myth are to be understood. Feder's choice of structure--a general discussion of myth, followed by the application of that discussion to specific writers, followed by the suggestion of broader implications--is useful because it shows that sources not in fact intended for literary use can be themselves adapted for the profitable and critical study of literature. Moreover, eclecticism does not mean that Feder must not acknowledge the particular bias, purpose, and point of view intended by each author; indeed this is the very kind of variety which allows the flexibility necessary to permit myth to conduce to multiple levels of interpretation. Finally, Feder demonstrates that the establishment of a workable definition of myth is only the first step toward the development of critical theories about the significance of myth in a particular period and for a particular poet, but she warns, at all times the critic must remember that if the definition of myth is either too narrow or so general as to make the word 'myth' meaningless, the literary critic's analyses do both the function of myth and the poet a disservice.

In her preface, Feder announces her purpose, justifies her approach, and argues that such an approach is useful. She develops a definition of myth which states that it is both a "continuous and evolving mode of expression," and an "aesthetic key"; "such an approach elucidates the nature of myth as a key to unconscious mental processes and, at the same time, reveals some of the essential themes, symbols, and techniques of twentieth-century poetry."[3] Feder then argues the need to establish the role of myth; she says,

> The separation of myth into its functions in relation to the unconscious mind, to ritual practice, and to history aims chiefly at enlarging the critical perspective of this study through different emphases. . . . In modern poetry, of course, all these functions are fused, as they were when myth had an active role in ancient society. My hope is that the close analyses of its separate functions will enable the reader to experience the effect of myth in modern poetry as a total emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic one, and will indicate that its distortions and disclosures originate in the same source.[4]

Feder realizes that the creative writer does not necessarily perceive myth in its specialized forms or applications just as she realizes that the myth specialist works from the finished product and evolves theories which make the product satisfy specific and particular needs. Feder is aware also that both the myth specialist and the creative writer begin with the general impression and apply that impression to a specific end. As a literary critic, Feder must remain aware that although the application can be seen as specialized, the actual "myth" is not restricted to the specific application.

Feder's studies indicate that the themes of myth "express man's fear of and awe at the mysterious cycle of the death and rebirth of the year and his involvement in the mystery of his own birth, nature, and death."[5] These themes also emphasize how man "is continually confronted by the limitations of his own vision as he faces the unknown and, to a large extent, the unknowable, in the universe, his fellow man, and himself."[6] Most important, the themes

> indicate man's attempt to do something about the mysteries which continually remind him of his helplessness and at the same time challenge him with endless possibilities of control through his own imagination and action. This sense of control may spring from participation in ritual, which expresses anxiety through prescribed acts or assigns power to magic objects and words, or from the insight gleaned from the stark narrative of myth.[7]

In other words, man's need to control stimulates particular actions which perpetuate myth's significant social role. Such endurance amid changing particulars reflects myth's adaptability. Feder suggests that myth remains socially prominent because of its ability to function both subjectively and objectively; she implies that adaptability results from the interaction of personal and universal history and is not dependent on man's scientific and technological accomplishments: "In an age whose intellectual endeavors and whose values are determined largely by science and technology, myth continues to function, recording and interpreting the personal and universal history of man's inner life."[8] Feder's explications of man's continuing need for myth indicate her understanding of a variety of approaches to myth yet she remains careful to define problem areas. For example, she discloses the major problems which stem from the paradoxical relationship between art and myth when she says,

> Myth is not art, though it is used in all the arts; it promises more; its methods and functions are different. Myth is a form of expression which reveals a process of thought and feeling--man's awareness of and response to the universe, his fellow men, and his separate being. It is a projection in concrete and dramatic form of fears and desires undiscoverable and inexpressible in any other way. As it opens up the boundless reaches of man's vision, it defines the limits of individual life.[9]

The fact that simultaneously myth is not art, but used in all the arts points to the difficulty of separating myth from art. Myth raises to consciousness the process by which man thinks and feels; myth is a vehicle to assist the artist in his expression of universal feelings, and because myth is not confined to one medium, but is employed in all mediums, its expression makes use of all the senses. As myth reveals the near-infinite reaches of his imagination, it reminds man of his mortality and of his

personal limitations. Thus, because myth is used in all the arts, an examination of content rather than particular form reveals myth's presence in any given work of art.

As Feder moves toward her primary concern, which is how myth is used in modern poetry, her insistence upon precise definitions demands discussion of influential theories. Because of the trend toward psychological interpretation, Feder recognizes Freud's authority in shaping readers' responses to myth in literature:

> Freud's approach to myth as it appears in literature and the various theories and systems that stem from the Freudian view--supportive or opposing--have influenced assumption, discussion, and use of myth to such an extent that it is impossible for the twentieth-century reader to draw a neat line between myth as social or psychological vehicle and myth as poetic symbol or metaphor.[10]

The wide acceptance of Freud's discovery of the connection between myth and dream, and the popularity of his belief that myths used in literature function as a guide to the human psyche handicap the modern reader because these approaches limit myth's function to a single perspective. Yet significantly, Freud's "speculation on the relationship between phylogenetic and individual development suggests another basis for the persistence of myth in human society long after it has ceased to function in any organized ritual activity."[11] Myth survives at least partially because "myth functions as a symbolic language that mediates between the inner experience of the unconscious mind and the conscious awareness of daily reality and of society and history."[12] Such survival is of extreme importance to the poet:

> An evolving form, myth adapts to the inner voice of the poet, revealing many levels of feeling and perception at once. It adapts to his environment also, incorporating its changing

> approaches to reality, its assumptions about nature and man. Most important, myth expresses a continual interaction between the chaotic unconscious and the controlling conscious mind straining together and finally united in a stylized yet flexible symbolic structure.[13]

This tense union between the unconscious and the willed or purposeful constitutes a psychological world where the discovery of the meaning of myth and the molding of it into a personal instrument are suggested by a mingling of mythical allusions with colloquial language and contemporary references:

> Myth continues to flourish in modern poetry because it contains and enacts man's long conflict between his yearning for omnipotence within his own being or in a God he worships and his desire to accept his aloneness in a chaotic, uncontrolled universe; it also expresses his need to comprehend his own history and to discover some meaning and order in its record of violence and failure. If myth reflects modern man's compulsive hold on past values and attitudes, it also depicts his lonely and courageous questioning of traditional beliefs and solaces.[14]

Feder's definition suggests myth's continuing significance as a probe to explore the deepest layers of man's life:

> Myth is a narrative structure of two basic areas of unconscious experience which are, of course, related. First, it expresses instinctual drives and the repressed wishes, fears, and conflicts that they motivate. These appear in the themes of myth. Second, myth also conveys the remnants within the individual consciousness of the early stage of phylogenetic development in which myths were created. This characteristic is evident mainly in its plots. Myth is a story involving human limitations and superhuman strivings and accomplishments which suggest through action--usually of a ritual, ceremonial, or compulsive nature--man's attempt to express and thus control his own anxiety about those features of his physiological and psychological make-up and his external environment which he cannot comprehend, accept, or master. The characters of myth may be gods, men, or monstrous creatures with the qualities of both, but even in myths dealing exclusively with immortals, the narrative material, the portrayal of conflict and sorrow, and the resolution or revelation are all reflections of human concerns.[15]

Rather than restricting her definition to literary usage, anthropological origins, psychological probings, or historical justifications, Feder suggests that the importance of myth is a consequence of the interaction of all these areas. She argues that myth is a narrative structure of two basic and related areas of unconscious experience. The plots most clearly tie myth to the early stage of phylogenetic development while the themes--the expression of instinctual drives and the repressed wishes, fears, and conflicts they motivate--allow myth to evolve and adapt to the aesthetic and rational approaches of art and science. Moreover, the plots and themes always reflect human concerns--human limitations and superhuman strivings and accomplishments--which reveal man's attempt to control his anxiety about his physical and mental self and his environment which he cannot comprehend, accept, or master. Definitions of myth which inextricably bind particular analysis to an apparently definitive yet restrictive characteristic fail to consider that the myth itself fuses all characteristics. A major difficulty in understanding myth, then, results from the tendency to isolate one particular characteristic of myth and to treat that characteristic as a definitive approach to myth.

One of the most restrictive ways to define myth occurs with anthropologists, as Feder points out, whose concern with origin restricts "true" myth to the early stage of phylogenetic development in which myths were first created. Two contributors to this definition are Bronislaw Malinowski and E. O. James. Malinowski's belief that myth is a narrative revival or reestablishment of ritualistic, ceremonial, or compulsive primeval actions is reflected in his definition; he defines myth as "a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of a deep religious want, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even

practical requirements."[16] Because of his insistence on the connection with primeval reality, Malinowski affirms that narratives not originating in primitive society are not 'true' myths. Although Malinowski was one of the first to suggest that to understand myth, we must analyze its function in primitive society, he is not the only anthropologist who discredits the literary development of mythical narrative as myth. E. O. James also "limits the appearance of 'true' myth to primitive society, where, he says, precarious natural, social, and economic conditions are likely to promote its creation and growth."[17]

In light of such limitations, Feder suggests the importance of "Claude Lévi-Strauss who, clearly influenced by Freud, has attempted to discover a structural basis for myth and to work out its 'constituent units' or 'mythemes,' combinations of elements in myth which produce a coherent pattern. . . . Lévi-Strauss does not restrict his investigation of myths to those found in primitive society."[18] Indeed, in The Savage Mind, Lévi-Strauss hints at the power of evolution and adaptability inherent in myth: "Mythical thought for its part is imprisoned in the events and experiences which it never tires of ordering and re-ordering in its search to find them a meaning."[19] The ordering and re-ordering of events and experiences suggest the existence of patterns and the observation of patterns caused Lévi-Strauss to pinpoint problems with the Naturalist School: "The mistake of Mannhardt and the Naturalist School was to think that natural phenomena are what myths seek to explain, when they are rather the medium through which myths try to explain facts which are themselves not of a natural but of a logical order."[20] Lévi-Strauss's distinction points to man's desire to explain not merely the observed natural phenomena, but to explain the causes, or series of causes and

effects, which result in the creation of the phenomena. The latter explanation reveals facts which are of a logical order and, at least according to Lévi-Strauss, thereby associates myths with man's ability to reason.

The patterns defined by Lévi-Strauss can and do suggest myth's ability to adapt to man's changing definitions of himself, of others, and of his environment. Yet, reliance on a single pattern can lead to an oversimplification of myth. With his romanticizing of the myth of the eternal return to the point where he regrets modern man's inability to partake in the ritual, Eliade is a prime example of how a man becomes so bound to the exploration and explication of a particular pattern that he fails to see the significance of important social evolutions.

For Eliade, the myth of the eternal return illustrates man's need to repeat periodically the mythical moment of the passage from chaos to cosmos. This myth suggests two important propositions: "1. Every creation repeats the pre-eminent cosmogonic act, the Creation of the world. 2. Consequently, whatever is founded has its foundation at the center of the world (since, as we know, the Creation itself took place from a center)."[21] Further, Eliade's differentiation of sacred time and space and profane time and space occurs in the myth of the eternal return. Those objects and actions which archaic man associates with transcendent paradigms Eliade says have a sacred value. Therefore, objects and actions which have a sacred value exist in sacred time and space and further allow archaic man to come periodically into contact with the transcendent realm. Generally, then, the sacred is the means by which man remains in contact with the transcendent and the profane is that time and space man lives in everyday. The profane is bound to the world while the sacred is not.

Moreover, the sacred is the revelation of an absolute reality. The reality is absolute because of the existence of a transcendent paradigm. Through the sacred, religious man can experience the cosmos as it was at the mythical moment of creation. In contrast to the sacred, the profane maintains the homogeneity and hence the relativity of space. The profane does not participate in being because the profane was not ontologically established by myth; it has no perfect model.

According to Eliade, the various components of the sacred come together to transmute experience into a spiritual act but for profane man, that is for the nonreligious modern man, the cosmos transmits no message. The shift is from general myths which define reality to man's private mythologies. Modern man's private mythologies never rise to the ontological status of myths because they do not transform a particular situation into a situation which is paradigmatic. In modern society the archaic form of paradigms, says Eliade, has been replaced by an interest in the unconscious. The unconscious offers nonreligious modern man solutions for the difficulties of his own life, and in this way plays the role of religion. The importance of the unconscious for modern man indicates one of the most significant shifts in man's understanding of being and becoming. But for Eliade, his contempt for nonreligious modern man who is bound to profane time causes him to reject modernity and embrace the primitive and the sacred.

Eliade, however, is not the only theorist who becomes so caught up in the archaism of myth as to become misleading. Philip Rahv, in The Myth and the Powerhouse, rightly attacks cultism and mysticism which abuse myth; he is especially critical of those who invest myth with properties he feels are beyond the scope of myth, and therefore he says of myth,

"Though the common matrix of both, it [myth] is neither art nor metaphysics. In fact, both art and metaphysics are among the superior forces which culture brought to bear in its effort to surmount the primitiveness of myth. Dialectic freedom is unknown to myth, which permits no distinction between realities and symbols."[22] Like Feder, Rahv correctly distinguishes myth from art, but when he differentiates historical retrospection and mythic immediacy, he echoes Eliade's belief in the sacred; he states, "We should not mistake historical retrospection, however richly allusive and organized in however 'simultaneous' a fashion, for mythic immediacy and the pure imaginative embodiment of a perpetual present."[23] Clearly, Rahv's comparison of myth and history reveals his attraction to myth's archaism:

> For the one essential function of myth stressed by all writers is that in merging past and present it releases us from the flux of temporality, arresting change in the timeless, the permanent, the ever-recurring conceived as 'sacred repetition'. Hence the mythic is the popular opposite of what we mean by the historical, which stands for process, inexorable change, incessant permutation and innovation. Myth is reassuring in its stability, whereas history is that powerhouse of change which destroys custom and tradition in producing the future. . . .[24]

These anthropological approaches to myth mean to explicate the primitive origins and purposes of mythmaking, and the patterns illuminated by these explorations subordinate the individual's sense of self to his sense of community. Psychological approaches to myth, on the other hand, stress the dominance of the individual's sense of self over his sense of community. Freud's explorations into the unconscious promote this shift in emphasis--his primary concern is with the individual and his methods investigate the relationships between the individual and society (both past and present). For example, unlike Eliade who believes that individuals strive to belong to the community, Freud believes that the growth of civilization forces the individual to sacrifice instinctive pleasure and to conform to society's dictates:

> We [psychologists] believe that civilization has been built up, under the pressure of the struggle for existence, by sacrifices in gratification of the primitive impulses, and that it is to a great extent for ever re-created, as each individual, successively joining the community, repeats the sacrifice of his instinctive pleasures for the common good.[25]

Freud's theory is substantiated by illustrations of how symbols which occur in dreams exist in each man's unconscious and inextricably bind him not only to his own past but to a primordial past as well. Freud also believes these dream symbols connect the individual to an era virtually unaffected by the processes of civilization:

> The era to which the dream-work takes us back is 'primitive' in a two-fold sense: in the first place, it means the early days of the individual--his childhood--and, secondly, in so far as each individual repeats in some abbreviated fashion during childhood the whole course of the development of the human race, the reference is phylogenetic.[26]

Freud is not so much concerned with how society has changed as with what the individual retains from the past and how that retained material is translated into concrete expressions which continue to connect individuals to each other and to the past:

> . . . these symbolic relations are not peculiar to the dreamer or to the dream-work by which they are employed; for we have discerned that the same symbolism is employed in myths and fairy-tales, in popular sayings and songs, in colloquial speech and poetic phantasy.[27]

The discovery of such widespread duplication of symbolic relations has seduced many mythographers and critics into believing a psychological approach to myth is definitive. However, the mythographer must remain aware that Freud's approach essentially shifts the emphasis of the investigation from concentration on the community to concentration on the individual. And the critic, who attempts to define how a writer communicates his message through the use of myth, must acknowledge that a

psychological approach to myth tends to restrict both the writer and the myth to one level of interpretation. In short, such an approach intimates or promotes ignorance of the social or communal context in which a mythic reference operates.

For the literary critic, specialized areas of study which isolate and investigate particular characteristics of myth fail to suggest why myth functions as a structural principle in long poetic structures. For example, Malinowski's and James's interests in the discovery of myth's origins in primitive societies prevent extensive investigation of myth's evolution and adaptability, and demand a distinction between 'true' myth and tales which are considered literary myth, legend, saga, or folktale. Eliade defines the importance of the unconscious for modern man, but, like Rahv, his interest in myth's archaism leads to an oversimplification of myth's function in modern society. Lévi-Strauss's work reveals patterns which suggest myth's evolution and adaptability, but his concentration on patterns denies extensive discussion of the fusion of myth's characteristics. And while Freud's investigations of the relationship between the unconscious and myth force modern man to explore the concepts of being and becoming (both in a private and a public sense),[28] his approach offers only a difference in perspective. Although modern society is dominated by this psychological approach to myth, it represents yet another example of the isolation and application of a specific mythic characteristic. One need not deprecate Freud's contribution, or the sophistication of its probes into the nature of being and becoming, to remember that a critical definition of myth must include it, yet not be dominated by it.

Unlike the mythographers whose specialized work isolates particular characteristics of myth for study, the literary critic who

studies myth must attend to the distinction suggested by Feder in her attempt to define myth. Definitions must reflect myth's importance to primitive society as well as suggest the means by which myth continues to function in a society dominated by science, technology, and interest in the unconscious. Myth is a narrative structure of two basic and related areas of unconscious or consciously suppressed experience whose themes express instinctual drives and the repressed wishes, fears, and conflicts that they motivate, and whose plots convey the remnants of the early stages of phylogenetic development. Invariably, myth reflects human concerns, human limitations and superhuman strivings usually expressed in ritual, ceremonial, or compulsive actions which illustrate man's desire to do something about those aspects of his environment and of his physiological and psychological make-up that he cannot comprehend, accept, or master. Myth evolves and adapts because those aspects of man's environment and of man's psychological and physiological make-up which dominate myth can never be comprehended, accepted, or mastered completely. Moreover, this insistence on human concerns, especially the concerns expressed in the themes, reflects myth's ability to adapt to the aesthetic and rational approaches of art and science. The plots which convey remnants of phylogenetic development help myth transcend time because the plots simultaneously tie man to his remote past while he attends to the concerns of the present and of the future.

As Feder emphasizes, then, a definition of myth must be holistic; only when the fusion of myth's characteristics is understood can the literary critic adequately understand how myth resonates in a piece of modern literature. My own feeling is that the popularity in English Canada of single volumes of poetry which use myth as a structural principle

points to the need to define myth's continuing relevance to society and to the arts.

Let me, then, repeat the major contentions with which I began. Modern and contemporary English Canadian poets have chosen titles meant to indicate something of the process, topic, or definition which individual poems in the volume jointly explore. The unification of the collection is indicated by the ordering of the poems; the poet hopes this ordering will allow the reader to consider individual poems as interacting parts of the whole, and ultimately to regard each volume as a single extended poem. Insofar as the volume offers a series of complete poems, the author attempts to engage the reader in multiple perspectives, forcing him to look from several different angles of vision. But insofar as the collected poems interact, these multiple perspectives are often controlled by or contained within the poet's use of a comprehensive myth, comprehensive in the sense that Feder prescribes.

Comprehensive myth offers clues to contemporary thought, and to poetic techniques and themes; it also depicts various levels of human perception and consciousness. Further, comprehensive myth's ability to evolve and adapt accommodates the poet's need for universal structures which allow private themes to evolve to the status of public themes, and in this way, such myth gives the poet a sense of control. Thus, the poet relies on the characteristics of myth which ensure revelation: the conflict between human frailty and superhuman longings; the tension between denial and disclosure; and the recurrence of struggle and at least partial resolution, of the movement toward conquest or metamorphosis, and of destruction and renewal. The poet combines personal and historical conflicts in his mythical allusions and structures; his observance of the

supernatural and the infinite exposes individual solitude and fantasy. And when the poet uses myth as an aesthetic device, he explores and recreates individual experience. Thus, the themes and plots of myth help the poet express both individual and universal concerns.

The methods of myth also assist in the creation of an extended form. Because myth blurs the distinctions between the inside and the outside, fantasy and reality, and linear time and transcendent time, the poet can express relationships between and within these categories in direct rather than parallel ways. That is, the poet adopts as his technique this blurring of the usual boundaries between and within categories; the poles of a category are no longer rationally and lineally linked together. Thus while the poet consciously arranges his poems in a logical and linear order which moves to a specific conclusion, his adoption of the methods of myth permits the exploration of relationships within that linear structure in non-parallel ways.

The use of myth does not diminish the violence, pain, and despair of the age; it does not relieve or prevent the suffering of the poet; rather, myth fixes the conflict and disorder of the present within a pattern which includes past and future. In combination with colloquial language and contemporary references, myth provides a structural principle which adds to and progressively accumulates meaning from otherwise unrelated metaphors, images, and symbols.

Let this general definition of "comprehensive myth," then, serve as a context for my intention to illustrate the various ways English Canadian poets use myth as a structural principle; five examples, ranging from the use of myth as historical artifact (Jay Macpherson's The Boatman), to myth enacted (Gwendolyn MacEwen's The Armies of the Moon), to the

combination of documents, historical person, and characters from Classical mythology to create a "new" myth (Margaret Atwood's The Journals of Susanna Moodie), to the combination of legend and myth (Michael Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid), to experimenting with a Tarot pack (George Bowering's Genève) will be discussed at length.

Jay Macpherson's The Boatman represents perhaps the simplest and one of the least successful ways of employing myth for structural purposes. Because Macpherson is less interested in duplicating the form and method of myth than in what particular characters in and events from myth have come to mean through their use in literature, her attempt to reproduce one of the major themes of myth (the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth) through the form in which she presents her work (a quest requiring a strong narrative thread) is dominated by an artifactual sense of myth. Although her attempted narrative and her content depend on mythic allusions, the relationship between the narrative and the mythological symbols in individual poems is difficult to discern.

In Gwendolyn MacEwen's The Armies of the Moon, however, myth as presented artifact does not exist. Rather, Armies conveys a sense of myth enacted through the experiences of actual people. MacEwen offers a personal, inward journey which is framed by a physical journey to the moon. This inward exploration makes use not only of references from Classical myths and from religion, but also of the blurring of boundaries between categories and the suspension of linear time which the methods of myth make possible. MacEwen's is a most sophisticated understanding of how myth works, and this understanding is revealed in the way her use of the characteristics and methods of myth control and contain the multiple perspectives offered by a series of poems. MacEwen, however, does not

create a "new" myth; rather, she illustrates how the methods of myth continue to enable the exploration of what man cannot accept, comprehend, or master.

Atwood, on the other hand, does create a "new" myth. The Journals of Susanna Moodie is an incarnation of our past, a dramatic illustration of a Canadian myth Atwood creates through a combination of documents (books by Susanna Moodie) and the articulation of a voice of Susanna Moodie which Atwood kept overhearing when she read Moodie's works. Atwood gradually changes Moodie from a historical person to a character in her myth by making her the representative of the state of the Canadian psyche. Moodie's classical counterparts are Persephone, and the Triple Goddess, Diana, Venus, Hecate. Through making Moodie's actions the same as the actions of her counterparts, Atwood duplicates mythic themes and plots, and effectively creates a Canadian myth.

In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Michael Ondaatje also creates a myth, but his methods of creation and his application of the characteristics of myth are substantially different from Atwood's. Through a combination of prose and poetry, Ondaatje simultaneously perpetuates Billy's status as outlaw-hero while endowing him with artistic abilities which together change Billy from legendary hero to paradigmatic representative of the artist-outsider. To accomplish this transformation, Ondaatje mixes extensive and direct use of documents, primarily books about Billy's feats, with the Kid's personal views and artistic achievements. Thus, the articulation of Billy's voice (a voice which was missing in the documents), plus the adoption of a fragmented time scheme, which helps suspend the restrictions imposed by linear time, permit Ondaatje's use of legend which gave Billy his status of hero in combination with the methods

and characteristics of myth, to create the myth of the artist-outsider, a myth for which Billy the Kid is the paradigmatic model.

George Bowering also attempts to make use of a model in Geneve. For Bowering, the Tarot pack functions as a model which he hopes first will reveal a connection to the collective unconscious, and second, will, through this tie to the unconscious, help him discover something about himself. Bowering's use of myth as a structural principle clearly is determined by his use of the Tarot which visually captures the paradigmatic characters from and situations of myth. While he says that he did not consciously determine the order in which the cards appear, his "pile" is not rearranged at any time during the writing of his book, and therefore, the random order of the cards is determined by fate, while the structure of the book is controlled by the order of the appearance of the cards. Bowering turns the cards over one at a time, and contemplates the picture before him; he hopes that his meditations will assist him in his exploration of personal fears and desires. Yet, because Bowering denies knowledge of the meanings of the symbols on each card, the full impact and meaning of the cards, and by implication the myths which the cards represent, are not realized, and Bowering's experiment is somewhat less than successful.

Following these discussions, a final chapter will summarize Macpherson's, MacEwen's, Atwood's, Ondaatje's and Bowering's use of myth as a structural principle and suggest the impact on Canadian poetry that the use of extended forms has had and will continue to have.

CHAPTER II

JAY MACPHERSON'S THE BOATMAN

Northrop Frye calls Jay Macpherson's The Boatman (1957) a "most carefully planned and unified book of poems. . . ."[1] Munro Beattie refers to the collection as the "most intricately unified book in Canadian poetry."[2] Frye, Beattie, and others praise Macpherson's use of poetic conventions and her multiplicity of both literary and mythological allusion. These critics seem to believe that the mere use of allusion and mythological symbol necessarily results in the creation of a coherent narrative which causes the interaction of both individual poems and entire sections, and that this narrative progressively reveals Macpherson's total theme: the cycle of birth, death, and restoration which is accomplished through developing and regaining artistic vision.

The content of The Boatman is dominated by literary and mythological allusion and by mythological symbols. Many of these mythological symbols allude to their own use in previous literature. This tends to make Macpherson's reuse of them artifactual. In form, The Boatman is, purportedly, a cycle which reveals the theme. Macpherson attempts to create a narrative which provides the connectives which join poem to poem, and section to section, in a manner that takes the cycle from beginning to completion. The content is meant to convey or to reinforce this form, but it does not because the predominance of allusive mythological symbols confuses point of view, offers insufficient guidance for the formal experience, and causes unnecessary repetitions which impede

the progress of the theme. For an extended form, then, Macpherson's adoption of mythological symbol which functions as allusion limits myth's use as a structural principle because allusion, rather than creating a coherent narrative which controls and progressively reveals the theme, enlarges the referential scope of the material by diffusing meaning.

Macpherson divides her collection into six major parts, prefaced by a single poem entitled "No Man's Nightingale": Part I, "Poor Child," deals with post-natal consciousness which is characterized by a vague recollection of an unfallen world; Part II, "O Earth Return," and Part III, "The Plowman in Darkness," are concerned with fallen mankind. These two sections contain matched lyrics, which in form are reminiscent of Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience; the titles of these sections come from two Blake poems. The characters are predominantly female, and Part II is generally faithful to the traditional stories associated with the characters, while Part III is characterized by colloquial language which gives a 'new' tone and interpretation to the same stories. Part IV, "The Sleepers," sees the partial recovery of man's lost wholeness through dream; Part V, "The Boatman," depicts the wilful dream of art; and Part VI, "The Fisherman," is subtitled "A Book of Riddles" and, with the final poem, offers a vision of restored order.

To present the developing and regaining of artistic or visionary consciousness, Macpherson draws heavily upon Blake's conception of the artist,[3] and imitates Eliot's use of the quester figure. From Blake, she learns how to equate fallen man with imagination or vision, and like Blake, she stresses the regaining of wholeness through experience. From Eliot, she learns how the Fisher King myth can be used to present and hold together a variety of points of view. From both Blake and Eliot, Macpherson

learns the necessity of presenting both the positive and the negative consequences of man's fall. What saves The Boatman from the radical, visionary preachings of Blake, and from the rather depressing, hopeless mood of Eliot in The Waste Land is Macpherson's adoption and adaptation of verse forms which give an ironic overtone to the serious poems and a witty, though rarely humorous, tone to the lighter lyrics. Generally, Macpherson believes that man's problem lies in his duplicity, in his feeling a division or separation between inner and outer being. To become whole, man must pass through experience; he must organize the chaos created by his feeling of duplicity. Man's final state of being must embrace and structure the chaos from which it is formed. To illustrate how this duplicity can be conquered, Macpherson's book attempts to explore and to explain how to get the inside out, and then back inside again.

After some rereadings, the reader becomes aware of the several organizing schemes and principles that I have been outlining, and aware that, as reader, he is meant to have a part in them. But not until Part V, "The Boatman," does Macpherson, either as speaker, or through the use of allusion, explicitly and coherently reveal that scheme through her narrative. In Part V she consistently and exclusively uses Biblical mythology to assist in her description of the process the reader is involved in; a narrative structure finally emerges because Macpherson here uses allusion to control the process; her allusions now help her give the reader explicit direction, now firmly guide him through the cycle.

Earlier in the collection, however, the allusions fail to convey the theme, in part because they seem to be doing other things so intensely. Macpherson uses mythological symbol and literary allusion in combination with poetic conventions so well that she creates a timeless

style from which the control and direction demanded by a narrative structure have difficulty emerging. Northrop Frye defines the timelessness of Macpherson's style by illustrating her use of poetic conventions:

> Among these [conventions] are the use of a great variety of echoes, some of them direct quotations from other poems, and an interest in myth, both Biblical and Classical that may make some readers wonder uneasily if they should not be reading it with a mythological handbook.
>
> One should notice in the first place that the echoes are almost invariably from the simplest and most popular types of poetry. They include Elizabethan lyrics ("While Philomel's unmeasured grief" sounds like the opening of a madrigal); the lyrics of Blake; hymns ("Take not that Spirit from me"); Anglo-Saxon riddles; Christmas carols ("The Natural Mother"); nursery rhymes ("Sheba"); ballads and newspaper verse ("Mary of Egypt" and the second "Sibylla"). The use made of these echoes is to create a kind of timeless style, in which everything from the tags of mediaeval ballad to modern slang can fit. One has a sense of rereading as well as reading, of meeting new poems with a recognition that is integrally and specifically linked with the rest of one's poetic experience.[4]

Here, Frye equates time with literary periods and, thus, timelessness is defined by the suspension of our sense of literary periods which are associated with and characterized by particular styles of writing. When Frye comments on Macpherson's use of mythology, he correctly equates her use of myth with allusion, but then attempts to deny that the myths function like allusions:

> Miss Macpherson's myths, like her allusions, flow into the poems: the poems do not point to them. Knowing who Adam and Eve and Noah are will get one through most of the book, and although a glance at the opening page of Robert Graves's Penguin book on Greek myth might help with Eurynome, I find no poem that has a key to its meaning outside itself.[5]

Frye's simile "like her allusions" implies that he believes that the myths have the same role as allusions: to call to mind the context and meaning of the original work, and thereby to influence or to direct the reader's understanding of what the work in which the allusion appears means. By

definition, allusions refer to something beyond the work in which they appear. But, with the insistence that Macpherson's poems, and by implication the myths and allusions within those poems, are self-contained (the poems have no meaning beyond themselves) Frye redefines allusion. Usually, allusions are keys to the meaning the poet wishes to convey, but Frye, by insisting that the reader need not know the original myths, and by insisting on the similarity between myth and allusion, suggests that allusions that do not function as allusions are allusions anyway. Frye himself falls victim to this contradiction when he quotes from and then explicates a stanza from "The Sleeping Shepherd":

> O wake him not until he please,
> Lest he should rise to weep:
> For flocks and birds and streams and trees
> Are golden in his silver sleep.

> For thousands of years poetry has been ringing the changes on a sleeper whom it is dangerous to waken, and the myths of Endymion, of the bridegroom in the Song of Songs, of Adam, of Blake's Albion, of Joyce's Finnegan, are a few of the by-products.[6]

Frye himself cannot help but state the many myths which the four lines bring to mind, yet he insists that, "Such myths in the background enrich the suggestiveness of the above four lines, but the lines are not dependent on the echoes, either for their meaning or for their poetic value,"[7] and his insistence causes him to be misleading. Poets do not allude to myth in this manner in order to bring out explicit meanings; the lines themselves must have meaning or the poet writes jibberish, not poetry. And, allusions to myths and their literary by-products cannot guarantee poetic value. Here, Frye's attempts to applaud Macpherson's skills as a lyricist, and to illustrate how poems which contain allusion to myth are self-contained, make him ignore Macpherson's successful use of

allusion. The meanings of her poems are contained in the lines, but the suggestiveness of her echoes causes the poems to expand their reference, and, therefore, the meaning of individual poems diffuses or radiates outward from the immediate meaning conveyed by the original lines. In order for a narrative to emerge from the content, Macpherson needs a controlling or a directing voice which is capable of uniting or holding together a variety of perspectives, and which provides links between poems and between sections. Because the poems, including many 'spoken' by Macpherson, tend to work from themselves, from their centres, outward to introduce and to add to the multiple experiences suggested by the allusions, they too often overwhelm the simple connectives that might have created bonds between poems, and which, therefore, would create a strong narrative thread. The failure of the content to convey the narrative is evidenced by the predominance of allusive mythological symbols which confuse point of view.

The Boatman begins with a short lyric entitled "No Man's Nightingale." This is a prefacing poem, which, if the collection is to present a unified and coherent cycle, might have suggested something of the nature of the cycle, and should at least have indicated who will be the reader's guide. No critic who argues for the unity of The Boatman mentions, let alone analyzes, this important lyric. Like the five other poems which are printed in italics,[8] "No Man's Nightingale" seems to give the reader directions from the poet. Here, through diction and images which are reminiscent of Eliot and Blake and which are combined with allusions to Classical and Biblical mythology, Macpherson introduces her theme and enigmatically defines the journey.

The poem is addressed to "*Sir*," who the reader assumes is

himself. The speaker, Macpherson, then defines her position; she is "*no man's nightingale.*"[9] This declaration negates or reverses both the position traditionally associated with this bird,[10] and Eliot's use of the nightingale in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" and in The Waste Land.[11] With the connection to man denied, this nightingale defines her association with the Angel, who introduces a Christian element by suggesting the guidance and hope promised by Christian doctrine. The poet-nightingale sings and thrives "*by Angel finger fed*";[12] the "*Angel's word/ Exalts an air of trees*" and "*Shrouds*" the poet-bird "*in secret.*"[13] The forest, transformed by the word of the Angel, offers protection and renewal.[14] Thus, "No Man's Nightingale" suggests that renewal or restoration may be obtained through the help of this Angel; this renewal Macpherson ties to nature and to man's fallen state through personifying herself as nightingale. The reader assumes that Macpherson, who is the nightingale and who is the reader's "*foolish bird*,"[15] will guide him on a journey towards renewal. The lyric is spoken by Macpherson who as nightingale defines the point of view which the reader hopes will provide direction throughout the following poems.

From the opening poem, the reader moves to Part I, "Poor Child," expecting to find his guide and to begin his journey. It is, however, virtually impossible to find the directing voice in the opening lyric. "Ordinary People in the Last Days" begins the cycle with the suggestion that the apocalypse is at hand. The title echoes the theme developed in the Book of Revelations, and the experiences of the speaker, his mother, his father, his sweetheart, his sister, and his brother suggest that the apocalypse is imminent. Through mixing the signs of the apocalypse which are taken from mythology with the ordinary action of this male

speaker's family and sweetheart, Macpherson illustrates the speaker's failure to comprehend the signs. This speaker in fact fails to notice that he has been given a sign:

> A mouse ran away in my wainscot.
> I study all day and pray all night.
> My God, send me a sign of Thy coming
> Or let me die.[16]

At this time, then, the speaker does not believe that signs have been offered. His sign, the mouse running away in the wainscot, is as inexplicable in this context as was the Sign of Jonas to an earlier generation that pleaded with Jesus Christ for a sign;[17] its significance is lost on a speaker who is wanting in perception.

Macpherson's use of Classical mythology to illustrate the signs of the apocalypse suggests her belief in the universality of mythology; she may believe Christian mythology provides the method for restoration, but she also believes that the characters and events of Classical mythology play a vital role in illustrating the need for and the way to restoration. But while it is possible to discern Macpherson's reasons for mixing mythologies, it is difficult to understand how "Ordinary People in the Last Days" starts the quester on his way. This difficulty is caused by the problem of defining the speaker of this poem. This speaker is neither Angel, nor nightingale, and is, in fact, male, and totally unfamiliar. Thus, immediately after receiving, in the prefacing poem, an indication of who the speaker will be and what path she will take, the reader is confronted with an unfamiliar speaker whose fate it is to be denied the described apocalypse. While Macpherson's allusions combine mythologies in a way which suggests the relevance of Classical mythology to the Biblical conception of the apocalypse, they fail to define the

speaker or the lyric in terms which sustain the point of view initially offered.

Macpherson possibly could overcome this initial shift in point of view by using this male speaker throughout the six parts of the collection, but she does not. In the next lyric, Macpherson becomes the speaker; however, she is not the nightingale, but a controlling voice which defines "Poor Child." The characters who exemplify Poor Child live in the fallen world, and are mortal, and all, suggests the speaker, long for a better state of existence. Macpherson offers examples of poor children, examples which include the royal goosegirl; heroes (Achilles and Odysseus); Philoctetes, the most famous archer in the Trojan War who was the friend and armor-bearer of Heracles; the modern failed, or anti-hero Prufrock; and everyone who reads the poem.[18] She suggests the desire for restoration, for "absolute return,"[19] through mixing mythology, religion, and literature. Her examples call to mind both the ordinary actions of the common man and the extraordinary actions of heroes, and thus her allusions here both ensure the involvement of every man, and suggest the immortality of and the universal existence of Poor Child. Yet, because "Poor Child" uses a speaker who is not recognizable as Angel, nightingale, or the male speaker of "Ordinary People in the Last Days," the reader is uncertain what role the apocalypse in the first poem and Poor Child in the second poem play in Macpherson's scheme; he does not know which point of view to adopt.

For the next three lyrics, Macpherson sustains the voice she first presents in "Poor Child," but just when the reader adjusts to this voice which begins to connect poems, she changes, not the speaker of the poem, but the way the allusion in the poem works. In "The Thread" and

"Cold Stone" for example, Macpherson's allusions help clarify something about the speaker, but in "In Time of Pestilence" this speaker seems unaffected by the allusion, and therefore the reader experiences yet another shift in point of view. In "In Time of Pestilence" Macpherson introduces a "she" who the poet implies through an allusion to Typhon's mother, is Gaea, the Mother Earth:

> She is sick: and shall she heal?
> Well she may, the world is foul.
>
> What comfort shall those hands afford
> That fondled Typhon's new-born head?
> What good charm shall that throat record
> Stabbed through to keep her in her bed?[20]

What remains unclear is whether or not the "she" of the poem is in some way related to the poet, and how this time of pestilence relates to the narrative that Macpherson began to develop in the preceding lyrics. The apparent distance between speaker and allusion comes not from a mishandling of allusion by the poet, but rather from the failure of the narrative to reveal how the allusion and the speaker together serve to advance Macpherson's cycle. That is, the reader understands that the speaker (the poet) uses allusion to suggest both the extent of the pestilence and the hope that the sickness may be healed, but, because the speaker is not recognizable as one of the promised guides, the allusion does not work backward to the earlier lyrics or forward to future lyrics; the allusion provides one perspective on the world which is not linked clearly to other perspectives offered in other lyrics.

This type of distance between the speaker, the allusion, and the narrative dominates Part II, "O Earth Return," where Macpherson retells the tragedies of several fallen women, all of whom are mythological

characters. In all but one lyric ("The Rymer") Macpherson is the speaker, but while her voice controls and describes the stories within individual poems, it fails to indicate how each allusion relates to the allusion which precedes or follows, and thus the reader is left with a series of examples which do not relate to any specific step or steps in the cycle. The allusions (the stories they recreate, and the myths and the literature which these allusions recall) provide a number of different perspectives which comment upon the nature of experience in the fallen world, but because Macpherson jumps from character to character, from poem to poem, without comment, the reader fails to understand how these multiple perspectives help him along the road to restoration.

This reader's difficulty with knowing what to do with the perspectives in Part II becomes greater in Part III, "The Plowman in Darkness," where Macpherson no longer controls, through her voice, the perspectives offered in each lyric. In "Sibylla," "The Rymer," and "Mary of Egypt" for example, the characters retell their stories in colloquial language; Sibylla, the Rymer, and Mary offer personal points of view. Here, the characters imply the tragedies associated with their stories by accepting their plights which they attempt to rationalize or justify. For example, in this second encounter, Sibylla[21] offers a witty interpretation of her association with Apollo. The familiar language, coupled with the repeated alternating rhymes in each of the quatrains, lightens the tone and effectively establishes a perspective with which Sibylla seems satisfied:

> I took his gift and thwarted him,
> I listened to his vows, and
> Though looks are gone and eyes grow dim,
> I'll live to be a thousand.

I'm mercifully rid of youth,
No callers plague me ever:
I'm virtuous, I tell the truth--
And you can see I'm clever![22]

The second Rymer lyric graphically describes the Rymer's visit with the Queen of Hell, Persephone:

Want to know where I've been?
Under the frost-hard
Ground with Hell's Queen,
Whom there I embraced
In the dark as she lay,
With worms defaced,
Her lips gnawed away.[23]

At the end of the lyric, the Rymer, through hearing, or imagining, the objections of the audience, ignores the horrific implications of his visit and leaves the reader with a nervous giggle:

--What's that? Well, maybe
Not everybody's dame,
But a sharp baby
All the same.[24]

Or finally, in "Mary of Egypt," Mary Magdalene is coarsely humorous about working her way from Egypt to the Holy Land as a prostitute:

Mamma was a nice girl, mind,
Hard up, but a good sport and kind--
Well, the blessed upshot was,
Mamma worked her way across
From Egypt to the Holy Land
And here repents, among the sand.[25]

In these three examples, the reader understands the contrast between the traditional story given by Macpherson in Part II and the colloquial version given by the characters in Part III, but mere contrast is insufficient to move a narrative forward, especially when that narrative has not been clearly established. The familiar terms used in "The Plowman

in Darkness" do not alter essential details of the stories; the terms in fact make the original myths seem more immediate, but these terms also mean that the reader confronts yet another way to use allusion to present different points of view.

In each of "Sibylla," "The Rymer," and "Mary of Egypt" the point of view is that of the speaker who is either a character from the original myth (Sibylla and Mary Magdalene), or a character who has a relationship with a mythic character (the Rymer with Persephone). Generally, the allusions are to the original myths in which these characters appeared, but the allusions also recall any literature in which Sibylla, Mary, or Persephone, or any aspect of their stories, play a role. Because characters explain or justify the roles they believe they had, the reader must temper his response to these lyrics by weighing his knowledge of the original myths against his knowledge of the use of these myths in literature, and against the characters' versions in these lyrics. Once the reader understands the full implication of the allusion, he then attempts to make sense of these different points of view. The attempt becomes futile, however, because these points of view are not governed by an identifiably dominant voice which regulates and advances Macpherson's theme. The reader simply lacks clues as to which point of view will move him toward renewal.

This confusion of point of view stems in part from Macpherson's failure to provide sufficient guidance throughout the collection. And because the poet seems aware that her allusions confuse point of view and do not convey a narrative thread which provides clues to the movement of the theme, she attempts to offer directions by presenting poems spoken by herself and printed in italics. These directions, however, fail to create

and sustain the narrative because the allusions in these lyrics are not clearly related to the allusions used in other poems.

Earlier I noted that Macpherson begins The Boatman with a prefacing lyric ("No Man's Nightingale") which is printed in italics, and which introduces a guiding Angel and a nightingale (Macpherson) who seem to promise leadership, and who enigmatically define the nature of the cycle. But once the reader enters the six major parts of the book, the Angel and the nightingale disappear; the reader is left to confront and make sense of the points of view offered in individual lyrics. The association of poet with nightingale, in fact, does not surface again until Part III, "The Plowman in Darkness," where Macpherson presents two poems in italics. These lyrics are a prologue and an epilogue which describe the poet's relationship to the nightingale and the swallow.

In the prefacing poem, Macpherson appeals to her Muse to grant her both the voice of the nightingale and the voice of the swallow. She first speaks of the nightingale:

> *Take not that Spirit from me*
> *That kindles and inspires,*
> *That raises world from water,*
> *The phoenix from her fires,*
> *Stirs up the ravaged nightingale*
> *To bloom among her briars.*[26]

The opening of this hymn-like lyric implies that the "*Spirit*" which "*Stirs up the ravaged nightingale*" has been with Macpherson throughout her journey; this implication shocks and confuses the reader who since the prefacing poem has been unable to discover the promised voice of this bird. The allusions to a Spirit capable of saving the world, to the phoenix, and to the nightingale, suggest not only that this Spirit can accomplish all three feats, but also that the nightingale, because part

of that Spirit, is capable of the same thing. Macpherson, however, already implied this in the prefacing lyric; what she has not clearly established is a narrative which reveals how the nightingale accomplishes her feats.

In the second stanza, before the reader hears from the nightingale, Macpherson asks the Spirit to grant her yet another voice:

> *Sweet Spirit, Comforter*
> *That raises with a word*
> *The swallow in her house of mud,*
> *True but absurd,*
> *Allow a babbling bird.*[27]

In the epilogue, Macpherson retells the story of the two birds, but here the nightingale's song "*Raises a tree in flower and leaf/ By angel guardian graced*"[28] which recalls the guiding angel of the prefacing lyric and suggests that the voice of the nightingale is the voice to follow. The swallow accomplishes little; she "*Chatters, gabbles, all the day,/ Raises both Cain and Babel.*"[29] Macpherson's suggestion that the swallow raises "*Cain and Babel*" combines two allusions which effectively reinforces her desire to illustrate that the swallow's voice is both troublesome and unproductive. Yet, while this lyric tells the reader the difference between the nightingale's voice and the swallow's voice, it fails to suggest where either voice will be developed. And, because the allusions in the lyrics between the prologue and the epilogue are neither controlled by, nor clearly related to a voice which can be identified with the narrative, the reader fails to comprehend how Macpherson's directions provide guidance; the allusions in the poems written in italics have little to do with the allusions in the other lyrics in "The Plowman in Darkness," or with the allusions in poems in preceding sections.

The problems created by allusions which enlarge the referential scope of the material by diffusing meaning also impede the progress of the narrative. Because allusions and symbols fail to convey narrative and in fact confuse point of view and fail to provide guidance for the formal experience, an entire section of The Boatman appears to be an unnecessary repetition of a step in the cycle. Part III, "The Plowman in Darkness," seems only to rehearse the same step as Part II, "O Earth Return." Northrop Frye inadvertently identifies this problem when he defines how these two parts function. Frye says,

> The two parts are, like Blake's lyrics, matched by contrast against each other, the relation often being marked by identical titles. The contrast is not so much Blake's innocence and experience, though related to it, as a contrast between a theme idealized by a kind of aesthetic distance and the same theme made colloquial and familiar.[30]

By suggesting that the parts contrast the same theme, Frye implies that Macpherson explores the same part of her scheme in two separate sections. In terms of creating a narrative which takes the cycle from beginning to completion, this rehearsal of the same theme in "O Earth Return" and "The Plowman in Darkness" means that the second exploration of the theme ("The Plowman in Darkness") holds the cycle at the same point it was at in "O Earth Return." The allusions which fail to convey the narrative are therefore responsible for, at least indirectly, unnecessary repetition which impedes the momentum of the cycle.

These difficulties, which Macpherson has with content revealing theme, do not occur in Part V, "The Boatman," where she changes her strategy.

As the prefacing, and title poem of "The Boatman" makes explicit, Macpherson's interest now is almost totally with the reader.

Here, she states what she is trying to do: *"You might suppose it easy/ For a maker not too lazy/ To convert the gentle reader to an Ark."*[31] For the first time she clearly defines herself as a creator, or at least as a maker who will give direction to the reader. She explains what she must do:

> *After me when comes the deluge*
> *And you're looking round for refuge*
> *From God's anger pouring down in gush and spout,*
> *Then you take the tender creature*
> *--You remember, that's the reader--*
> *And you pull him through his navel inside out.*[32]

Macpherson then suggests why she and every poet must follow this process:

> *That's to get his beasts outside him,*
> *For they've got to come aboard him,*
> *As the best directions have it, two by two.*
> *When you've taken all their tickets*
> *And you've marched them through his sockets,*
> *Let the tempest bust Creation: heed not you.*[33]

Macpherson intends to teach the reader how, through getting his beasts outside himself, he becomes an ark. The process is, of course, metaphorical; the purpose of learning this process is to become whole, to alleviate man's inner and outer division. Responsibility is falling more and more into the hands of the reader. Yet, to make certain the reader understands the seriousness of his increasing responsibility, Macpherson gives a voice to the ark; in fact, by the end of the subsection entitled "The Ark," there can be no doubt that man is ark. When the ark departs, the reader has taken full responsibility; the ark leaves, saying, "You dreamed it. From my ground/ You raised that flood, these fears./ . . ./ From your dream/ I only shall not rise."[34]

The second section of Part V is "The Island," and these five lyrics are also directed at the reader. In "The Island" the reader is

instructed to,

> Look inward, love, and no more sea,
> No death, no charge, eternity
> Lapped round us like a crystal wall
> To island, and that island all.[35]

Once directed to look inward, the reader, who is the ark, encounters "The Inward Angel" who is defined as "planted as an inward eye."[36] Recovery of the lost garden is accomplished by looking inward.

Yet, Macpherson cannot let the reader believe that all that is to be recovered is beautiful and free. Thus, "Leviathan" reminds the reader that he lives not in a paradisial garden, but in the fallen world:

> The Lord that made Leviathan made thee
> Not good, not great, not beautiful, not free,
> Not whole in love, not able to forget
> The coming war, the battle still unmet.[37]

This overwhelmingly Biblical Part V (Classical mythology plays no part in Macpherson's directions to the reader here) represents the first time Macpherson clearly defines for the reader what her goal is and the process by which she will attain that goal. That Macpherson adopts a religious perspective is obvious from her concentration of Biblical images and references in her instructions. The connection between this process the reader undertakes and the process the artist undertakes when he creates is made explicit in the epilogue, "The Anagogic Man."

In this lyric, Noah "*walks with head bent down*"[38] for his head contains all creation:

> *Its gently shimmering sides surround*
> *All us and our worlds, and bound*
> *Art and life, and wit and sense,*
> *Innocence and experience.*[39]

At the end of "The Boatman" the reader realizes how he can become the ark,

why he must become the ark, and since he has become a Noah (Noah was the commander of the first ark, and therefore, by implication, the reader is the Noah of his ark) he contains not only all creation, but also all imagination; he has agreed to be an artist.

The difference between Part V and the preceding four sections is a change in strategy. Finally, Macpherson tells the reader of her scheme and how he is to be part of that scheme. Most important, she takes control; she uses allusions both to define the relationship between herself, her work, and her reader, and to suggest the broader implications which allusions always bring with them. Because the reader knows that she is in control and that her instructions are directed at him in order that he might understand the cycle which structures her scheme, a straightforward progressive narrative clearly emerges from the content. Allusions in this part, but only in this part, reinforce point of view, guide the reader, and prevent the unnecessary repetition of steps in the cycle.

CHAPTER III

GWENDOLYN MacEWEN'S THE ARMIES OF THE MOON

In 1972 Gwendolyn MacEwen published The Armies of the Moon, her fourth book of poetry. Like her previous works, Armies involves inquiry "into the process by which mystical enlightenment can be gained--by which the bland phenomena of the world can be induced to reveal arcane knowledge."[1] But unlike the inquiries in The Rising Fire, A Breakfast for Barbarians, and The Shadow-Maker which attempt to ingest and digest the entire cosmos, The Armies of the Moon is more personal; the process is concerned with the comprehension of the self. "The impulse to orbit, encircle, enclose, take in this universe has changed in favour of a more microcosmic approach. The traveller chooses the inward journey to encompass the self. . . ."[2] Yet, as early as A Breakfast for Barbarians (1966) MacEwen hints at the importance of an inner journey:

> The particular horrors of the present civilization have been painted starkly enough. The key theme of things is the alienation, the exile from our own inventions, and hence from ourselves. Let's say No--rather enclose, absorb, and have done. The intake. Surely the mind deals with its pains in its own time, as the body does.
>
> I believe there is more room inside than outside. And all the diversities which get absorbed can later work their way out into fantastic things, like hawk-training, IBM programming, mountain-climbing, or poetry.[3]

In this introduction, MacEwen implies a relationship between fantasy and reality which finds its most complete expression in The Armies of the Moon. MacEwen's list of the things that work their way out from the inside reveals her belief that poetry is at least equal to man's ability

to control and to teach (hawk-training), to invent (IBM programming), and to conquer (mountain-climbing). In turn, the reality represented by these listed accomplishments she calls "fantastic" which in effect blurs the boundary between the imaginary and the real. This blurring occurs after "all the diversities" have been taken inside. This suggests first that the outside reflects the inside, second that the inside is larger than the outside because the inside absorbs diversities and then creates something new which then finds its expression outside, and third that, as a consequence, it is difficult to distinguish the inside from the outside. In short, MacEwen implies that in poetry, as in myth, the internal and the external are not true opposites. Thus, by processes similar to the workings of myth, MacEwen's poetry allows her to express relationships between inside and outside in non-parallel ways; the poles which normally establish a strict and a logical hierarchy of material which clearly distinguishes the imaginary from the real, the internal from the external, are no longer rationally and lineally linked together.

These indistinct boundaries mean that in The Armies of the Moon MacEwen can assume that the imaginary and the real exist in the same dimension and, therefore, can be seen as two equal forces which first confront one another, but which eventually accommodate one another. As MacEwen illustrates, this confrontation and at least partial resolution is applicable to both the individual and all humanity. Two framing poems ("The Armies of the Moon" and "Apollo Twelve") implicate all of modern civilization; in the initial poem the speaker describes a violent confrontation between invisible armies and 'real' earthmen on the moon and, in the final poem, suggests how the moon can be used as a springboard from which man can explore outer space by combining scientific

achievements and the imagination. The three main sections ("Mare Crisium: The Sea of Crises," "Lacus Mortis: The Lake of Death," and "Lacus Somniorum: The Lake of Dreams") are applicable to the individual; the speaker experiences an inward journey and confronts the real and imaginary diversities she has absorbed. MacEwen's refusal to accept distinct categories for internal and external reflects a belief that getting the inside out necessarily leads to greater knowledge. This belief is reminiscent of Jay Macpherson's theories, but rather than adopting Macpherson's strategy of allusive mythological symbols which convey an artifactual sense of myth, MacEwen illustrates how myth is kinetic; that is, as Davey phrases it, how myth is "alive and re-enacted in the spontaneous actions of real people."[4]

In part, MacEwen is able to produce a kinetic myth because the narrative thread in the book is controlled and directed by a single voice. She provides the same speaker for both the framing poems and the main sections. In the framing poems, this speaker remains objective, preferring to describe the action from a distance. In the main sections, her position varies according to the needs of individual poems. Sometimes she refers to herself as "I"; at other times she distances herself from herself by using the second person "you," or by becoming part of a collective "we." But because the same speaker[5] describes both confrontations, MacEwen is able to indicate the similarities between conflicts while she provides the reader with guidance and direction.

The reader first meets the speaker in the initial framing poem which presents the confrontation between the real and the imaginary in terms which force modern man to reconsider the split between the achievements of science and the creations of the imagination. In the

final poem which completes the frame, the speaker illustrates how science and imagination can work together, rather than against each other. The setting for each framing poem is the moon[6] which traditionally is an object of contemplation which inevitably stimulates the imagination, but which now is likely to be considered only a satellite which scientific accomplishments allowed man to walk upon. Because "The Armies of the Moon" and "Apollo Twelve" frame the three major sections, they also provide keys or clues to those sections. The first poem, therefore, suggests the nature of the problems the speaker will encounter in her inner journey, while the final poem suggests how the imaginary and the scientific can work in harmony with one another and thereby help relieve the fears experienced by the speaker in her inner journey.

"The Armies of the Moon" introduces the invisible armies and the invading earthmen, and describes the battle between these two groups generally from the armies' point of view. The speaker first describes the forces of the moon and in doing so picks up the military metaphor suggested by the epigraph:[7] words such as "armies," "forces," "showdown," and "soldiers" imply some kind of violent confrontation. The speaker states that these armies "begin to gather their forces/ in the Marsh of Decay and the Sea of Crises."[8] After the forces are gathered, the speaker says that "in the Lake of Death there will be a showdown,"[9] and finally, "the lunar soldiers [will] reluctantly disband/ and return to their homes in the Lake of Dreams."[10] The Sea of Crises, Lake of Death, and Lake of Dreams are the titles of the three main sections, and, therefore, the reader assumes that in these sections he will discover a gathering of forces, a showdown, and a disbanding of forces. But, because of the problems these armies have with the earthmen, a more

precise definition of what will occur in the main sections is not possible. The reader does, however, learn more about the nature of the speaker's dilemma.

The armies have difficulty with their opponents who are obviously not militant. The earthmen do not seek a battle; rather they "come hunting with wagons and golfballs,"[11] looking "for white rocks and sand."[12] Not only did the earthmen not seek a confrontation, but also "they did not see them [the armies of the moon], invisible and silver/ as swords turned sideways on the edge of the craters."[13] The whole idea of a physical battle is hindered by the fact that the earthmen cannot see, and therefore, cannot determine, who their enemies are. This lack of perception caused by the invisibility of the opponent is reinforced by the speaker's failure to provide a precise definition of the armies who inhabit the moon. All that is known about these armies is where they live and that they cannot be seen. The reader, therefore, assumes that these invisible armies represent the forces of the imagination. This problem with perception characterizes the speaker's inner journey, particularly in the first part where her imperfect memory makes identification of her enemies difficult.

By the time the reader reaches the final poem in the collection, the military metaphor completely disappears; in fact, the armies do not appear in this poem. In "Apollo Twelve," the speaker illustrates the harmony or collaboration of scientific achievement and imagination by describing both a child's and an adult's responses to the moon. The poem opens with a description of the astronaut's childhood response to the moon. The speaker concentrates on the child's fantasies, and thereby succeeds in illustrating how space extends the childish imagination:

> Once his eyes raised the cool towers of space
> Over the roofs of his youth, and he lay
> Growing in the red shifting days beneath
> Orbiting castles and giants and starbeasts.[14]

The example of how elements of medieval fairytales can fuse with space adventure is immediately contrasted with the present where the speaker describes not the astronaut's fantasies, but the reality of his walking on the moon:

> Now he descends the steep mountain of the night
> To the breathless valley of the moon; earthlight
> Floods the lunar pools and craters accommodate
> The visitation of his step, his alien weight.[15]

MacEwen's diction draws attention to the relationship between the moon and the earthman. In the penultimate line, MacEwen says that the moon "accommodates" the step of the astronaut. The idea of accommodation softens the violence associated with the initial poem and implies the moon's ability to adapt to a change in roles. Exactly what that change in role involves is indicated in the next stanza which defines what the "earthrise" of "The Armies of the Moon" means and suggests what is meant by the word "finite":

> Earthrise is an eye beyond the blinding brim;
> Past sighing miles of silence the finite children
> Watch him become the satellite of his own dream
> And orbit the white world of his youth for them.[16]

The children who watch from the earth are finite because they do not use their imaginations to watch the astronaut; they simply observe the reality of his orbiting and landing on the moon. The astronaut's experience is quite different; now he walks upon a world and becomes a part of what was only a dream when he was a child. Now that this astronaut has conquered only what in youth his imagination could conquer,

he must move beyond the moon, and find something else upon which his imagination can focus:

> Computers map the territories of nether suns
> Where galaxies are graphic castles giants own;
> Now up the weightless slopes of time he climbs
> Through vacuous doorways to the gasping dark beyond.[17]

Here, science, represented by the computers, helps discover another source upon which the imagination can work. Thus, rather than the moon allowing the astronaut to see giants and castles, the computers give that role to the territories of nether suns. For the individual, taking the journey to "the gasping dark beyond"

> . . . suggests that the trip through the psyche has been a preparation and that those who were so 'eager for white rocks and sand/ that they did not see [the armies of the moon], invisible and silver/ as swords turned sideways' have reached the mental maturity to climb 'through vacuous doorways to the gasping dark beyond.' At least one space-man, our psychic representative, is ready to do this.[18]

The main sections of The Armies of the Moon reveal the battle which our psychic representative becomes involved in prior to her step "through vacuous doorways to the gasping dark beyond." The speaker of these poems experiences the trauma associated with getting the inside out. She uses a variety of characters to help her explain either how she gets the inside out, or what category she places the knowledge she has learned in once what she confronts is externalized. These characters are both mundane and exotic, ranging from a Greek dancer, a seamstress, a cook, sea creatures and a singer, to a buried figure at Pompeii, Artemis, Lilith, Salome, the whore of Babylon, Theodora, and God. Obviously, some characters belong to the everyday world and allow part of the process to be expressed in colloquial language; others reveal the speaker's

acquaintance with myth and religion, and suggest exposure to and knowledge of not one, but many theories, myths and religions. Such extensive knowledge reflects the speaker's modernity. The speaker's allusions reveal her exposure to the extensive use of modern transportation and mass media which make knowledge of a variety of theories, myths, and religions commonplace. Moreover, her references to the war in Vietnam and the bombing of Hiroshima substantiate my assumption that the speaker is a modern woman.

The variety and profusion of allusions means that no single line, phrase, poem, or section reveals an abstract statement of how to get the inside out. Yet, as I illustrated in my chapter on Jay Macpherson's The Boatman, multiplicity of allusion alone cannot guarantee kinetic myth. Rather, MacEwen "has turned here almost entirely to dramatic and indirect means. The themes of the book are similar to those given abstract expression earlier, but here they are for the most part presented in action."[19] Thus, understanding what MacEwen does is possible only by pursuing the drama, by following the speaker's journey.

While "The Armies of the Moon" implies the problems created by lack of perception, the speaker's personal battle seems more painful than the given cosmic confrontation. The difficulty of the speaker's pilgrimage is due in part to the dramatic nature of the confrontation, and in part to the relationship between MacEwen's speaker and MacEwen's Muse. In Armies, as in her previous works, MacEwen's speaker is female and her Muse is male. This Muse is a shape-changer who guides and inspires the speaker; his appearance in MacEwen's poems is vital for, as Atwood states,

> . . . there is one figure whose existence is hinted at throughout her work and who acts as a key to much of it. This is the Muse, often invoked and described but never named; and

> in MacEwen's poetry the Muse, the inspirer of language and the formative power in Nature, is male. Ignore him or misinterpret him and her "muse" poems may be mistaken for "religious" ones or reduced to veiled sexuality. Acknowledge him, and he will perform one of the functions MacEwen ascribes to him: the creation of order out of chaos.[20]

This shape-changing Muse suggests to both speaker and reader what must be explored if order is to spring from chaos. Often, however, the speaker is incapable of fully understanding or interpreting what she confronts, which in turn makes the reader's role more difficult. For example, the Muse frequently appears in connection with language and alphabets. "The Muse exists both inside and outside of time, and like the letters on a page he is static yet in movement. . . . The Muse is always <u>about</u> to be interpreted: he can never be completely deciphered."[21] The speaker's difficulty in holding onto the Muse, and understanding him is epitomized in "Letters of Water" where the speaker addresses the Muse although she cannot communicate directly with him because she fails to remember the language. She begins with "Everything I thought to tell you has become/ as worthless as an old forgotten tongue."[22] Not only do remembered events have the same value and meaning as a language no one remembers, but also the relationship between the Muse and the speaker is reduced to an indecipherable language:

> The lost sounds of our love
> have silenced and reformed my tongue, and now
> a silver alphabet is floating past my eyes unreadably,
> for all the secret things that we used to breathe
> are some strange language no more known to me.[23]

While the speaker experiences many problems deciphering and interpreting the Muse when he appears in connection with language and alphabets, his appearance as a singer or dancer frequently helps the speaker understand the process she is undergoing. For example, the Muse as a dynamic creator-actor appears in at least five different forms. In "The Holy

Burlesque" Laki, a performer in a Greek nightclub, gains secret knowledge through his dancing. In "The Child Dancing" the Muse is not a nightclub dancer, but a child who

> . . . danced
> in the Warsaw ghetto
> to some music no one else could hear[24]

In "The Film" the Muse becomes the screen upon which the movie unfolds:

> I think that when you raise your hand
> against those walls
> your flesh becomes a screen,
> the drama unfolds
> along your fingers
> and across your open palm the armies run
> and down your veins their false blood falls.[25]

In "Credo" the speaker defines the Muse as part of herself, and refers to him as a Dancer: "I believe it all because/ no one can tell me that/ the Dancer in my blood is/ dead."[26] Finally, in "The Hour of the Singer," the speaker describes what happens to her when the Muse is caught in mid-flight as he descends into the world:

> Your life falls away from the mouth of the singer
> and you are left with one song you must sing forever;
> all you have aspired to you have already done
> or seen in the eyes of the Indestructible One.
> This is the hour when it all falls away
> and you are lost in the blind mouth of the singer
> and everything you ever wanted is contained
> in the naked pause between his words.[27]

These various appearances of the Muse, coupled with the multiplicity of his shapes, might seem to confuse more than they promote the reader's understanding of what the speaker experiences, but knowledge of the Muse is vital to the reader's comprehension of the myth which informs all of MacEwen's work:

> The informing myth . . . is that of the Muse, author and inspirer of language and therefore of the ordered verbal cosmos, the poet's universe. . . . the Muse exists eternally beyond sense, but descends periodically . . . becomes incarnate for a time as magician, priest-king, lover or all of these, then dies or disappears, only to be replaced by another version of himself. Though the process is cyclical, he never reappears in exactly the same form. Each time he brings with him a different landscape and language, and consequently a different set of inspirations, though beneath these guises he keeps the same attributes. He is a dancer and a singer; his dance and his song are the Word made flesh, and both contain and create order and reality. . . . The Muse is both "good" and "evil," both gentle and violent, both creative and destructive; like language itself, he subsumes all opposites. Since he is infinite, the number of his incarnations is potentially infinite also.[28]

For MacEwen, then, the Muse can offer guidance and hints, but he may never provide absolute solutions because he changes with each incarnation. The Muse helps to make the speaker aware of her perceptual problems, but the speaker must determine by herself what the consequences and the meanings of such hints are. Thus, for much of the journey the speaker is on her own, and, as a consequence, some of the Muse's appearances are confusing, especially at the beginning where her trip through inner space first makes her dimly aware of what she does not know. Ultimately, however, the accumulation of the Muse's clues helps the speaker correct her faulty perception.

The speaker's inner journey consists of three major steps or levels: first, a series of crises, initiated by hints of what she has lost, causes her anxiety; second, confronting the forces of the moon in the world causes her some fear, but she begins to understand the correlation between the war within and the war without; and third, the speaker explains what she has experienced, although no absolute solutions are offered.

In "Mare Crisium: The Sea of Crises," the speaker's anxiety

takes four major forms: fear of the unknown, fear of the known, fear of fear, and a desire to contain things in order that she might then know and understand everything. The speaker's anxiety begins in "I Have Mislaid Something" where she "can't remember what it is"[29] that is missing, although she thinks it might have something to do with a lost language. She indicates a correlation between inside and outside when she states, "I have mislaid many places/ in this house without history";[30] her fear stems from her suspicion that she has severed connections to a history which hides within her. This fear of the unknown surfaces again in "Memoirs of a Mad Cook" where the speaker worries because she cannot prepare food for anyone. She says,

> it's so *personal* preparing food for someone's
> insides, what can I possibly *know*
> about someone's insides, how can I presume
> to invade your blood?[31]

Here, the mad cook fears that she is unable to prepare food which would provide sustenance. She is reduced to imagining "fantastic salads and soufflés/ that will never be."[32] Her fear leads to a paranoia which implies that she in fact seeks sanity through insanity; if she struggles long enough, she will eventually gain the knowledge she desires.

Sometimes, however, knowledge of what is to come causes as much fear as insanity does. Exactly half way through this section, in "Lilith," the speaker knows that the evil associated with Lilith[33] will eventually find its expression in the world without:

> Have no doubt that oneday she will be reborn
> horrendous, with coiling horns,
> pubis a blaze of black stars
> and armpits a swampy nest for dinosaurs[34]

In this instance, the speaker uses Lilith as a device to help her explain

how what is inside will work its way out. This Lilith lives inside, "trying to make holes in my brain/ or come forth from my eyes,"[35] and she is associated with evil uses of language as the speaker feels Lilith's "mindless mind within my mind/ urging me to call down heaven with a word,"[36] to be the "crazed Salome[37] who danced for blood."[38] This "Whore of Babylon, Theodora"[39] the speaker knows she will see in her dreams.

The speaker also fears the secret knowledge that Laki, in "The Holy Burlesque," possesses. She fears this knowledge because it forces her to acknowledge a part of human nature that neither she nor the other members of the audience wish to accept. The speaker first defines Laki's knowledge and then describes the effect that serious contemplation of that knowledge would have on the audience. What Laki knows is reflected in his eyes,

> where some primeval knowledge lingers, old
> hermaphroditic dreams and Oh so lovely sins
> of Sodom and Athens and East Toronto
> none of us can reasonably deny.[40]

She recognizes that the muse, here incarnated as the dancer Laki, provides a clue as to what kind of history must be confronted and accepted if complete knowledge is to be acquired; both she and the audience consider Laki an enemy and believe that, if they do not laugh at his performance, they will be forced into confronting and acknowledging what they cannot "reasonably deny":

> we'd fall over backwards
> into our *retzinas* or our seventh orange beer
> and rise, and repossess the stage
> we occupied before two thousand years.
> Our lies in a blaze of orange veils would vanish
> and the very gods might reappear.[41]

The many fears of things both imaginary (what seems to exist

only inside) and real, appear again in more general terms in "Phobos" where the speaker fears everything, even fear:

> I'm terrified of cars and planes and weather
> and fear itself which only makes me stronger
> as I walk like a broken child through scared streets
> through the wicked rubble of unspeakable nights[42]

The fear and the horror become synonymous with night, and with the darkness within; the speaker says,

> I turn now, surrendering my white side
> to the horror which will one day claim me[43]

Before the speaker decides to surrender to the horror within, however, she attempts to overcome her anxiety by containing things. In "Meditations of a Seamstress (1)," the speaker needs to create a world where everything fits. In fact, failure to make clothes to contain her body would cause disasters:

> I know somehow I'm fighting time
> and if it's not all done by nightfall
> everything will come apart again;
> continental shelves will slowly drift into the sea
> and earthquakes will tear wide open
> the worn-out patches of Asia.[44]

In "Dining at the Savarin" the idea of containment is given in a slightly different form. Here the speaker attempts to gain knowledge by devouring as much as possible. The language is colloquial and the speaker quickly realizes that this gorging is a symptom of a different kind of hunger; she therefore eats in shame. By the end of the poem she seems to understand why she so anxiously attempts to devour everything, but all she can do is pray for forgiveness from the Muse:

> . . . the organist plays those old songs we know so well
> we have forgotten, and I pray to the god of men and lobsters
> and all things that die and do not die

forgive me this second
unreal hunger, Lord of the infinite buffet[45]

In "The Vacuum Cleaner Dream," the speaker again dreams about being able to contain the universe. But, once more the attempt to contain fails; the speaker cannot understand the language, and the Muse, as lover, is sleeping:

And when I opened the bag
to empty it I found:
a dictionary of dead tongues
a bottle of wine
lunar dust
the rings of Saturn
and the sleeping body of my love.[46]

At the end of this section, the speaker imagines what message she would offer if she were a buried figure at Pompeii. "Note from a Figure at Pompeii" describes the speaker's release from fear; unfortunately, release is found only in death because "there have been warnings/ but no one has heeded them."[47] The "petrified awakening"[48] happens too late.

From this death which is also an awakening, the journey progresses to its second stage. In "Lacus Mortis: The Lake of Death" the speaker undergoes a series of confrontations, but here she understands more about what is happening to her. Thus, she is able to define what she feared and why, to offer examples of the internal war finding expression in the world, and to recognize both the duality of the battle and the nature of the war.

The section opens with "Two Aspects of the Moon" which is addressed to the Muse and which suggests, through two definitions of the moon, the paradoxical love-death, creation-destruction relationship the speaker believes she has with her Muse. The speaker begins,

Nor could I sometimes dare to write:
the moon was a cup from which we drank
the silver milk of night.[49]

Why the speaker cannot refer to the moon in this way she explains in the next stanza where the love she and the Muse share becomes associated with many destructive elements or forces in the world. The "ghosts of many martyrs moan;/ dark rain of war keeps falling,"[50] and the speaker says,

I witness the apocalypse of love
and understand how many died,
went up in flames
with an unrecordable cry.[51]

She keeps "seeing bullets"[52] beneath his skin, but rather than being able to heal him, she makes worse wounds "there where I thought a Romance lance tore you/ just below the heart."[53] The next portion of the poem "is nothing if it is not a prayer"[54] for those who have died; the speaker suggests that the love between herself and the Muse must include the dead,

For if we can't love them in loving each other
we are unworthy of this hour and of all dawns
forever, and have no right to bear
the proud scars of love we made.[55]

The poem ends with another definition which more clearly points to the paradoxical relationship between Muse and speaker which the moon embodies:

Nor could I sometimes dare to write:
the moon was a deadly scimitar beside your hair
and I woke with blood on my shoulder
from its sharp blade.[56]

The paradoxes suggested in "Two Aspects of the Moon" are expressed in many of the poems in this section. Of particular interest is the speaker's ability to see a correlation between what happens in reality and what happens in the imagination. "The Child Dancing," for example, describes three victims of other men's indulgence in war and

progress. All three children have faces "as pale and trusting/ as the moon";[57] two of them are characters from literature and are, therefore, products of the imagination:

> the boy with a green belly full of dirt
> lying by the roadside
> in a novel of Kazantzakis
> and the small girl T. E. Lawrence wrote about
> who they found after the Turkish massacre
> with one shoulder chopped off, crying:
> 'don't *hurt* me, Baba!'[58]

The third child, who the speaker says she will not write about, lives in the world and dances "in the Warsaw ghetto/ in his body of rags."[59]

In "The Other Underground," the speaker takes responsibility for much of what happens; she likens her internal struggles to the struggles in the world, and in the end she is able to define who the enemy is. She begins by asking, "who will absolve me of the crimes/ which I commit each night in dreams?"[60] The question is never answered directly; rather the speaker says, "I am so far underground you cannot find me;/ I fight with strange and silver armies."[61] The "strange and silver armies" are the forces of the moon, and the relationship between the mind, the inner self, and the moon is made explicit when the speaker states,

> You have not noticed that all wars
> are happening inside my head[62]

There are, however, no positive gains made from waging these wars. Instead, the speaker suggests she commits "alone,/ the atrocities of my time"[63] and uses Vietnam and Hiroshima as examples. She describes how the war started small and inside, and how it finally manifested itself in the world without:

> the midnights lit by warlight, scarlet stars,
> the sheer hallucination of our wars
> have somehow grown from small hurts, symbolic
> murders,
> and the tyranny is with us everyday
> in our small cruel lies,
> in our turning away from love,
> and the Enemy is where he always was--
> in the bleak lunar landscapes of our mirrors.[64]

Here, recognition that the Enemy is in the landscape of the moon and that this landscape is within leads the speaker to confess her position: "I'm so far underground you cannot find me,/ hating the untellable which must get told."[65]

The untellable is compared to the agony experienced by mental patients, and thus in "A Dance at the Mental Hospital," the speaker likens herself to one of the inmates and concludes:

> I too must clutch the world's most beautiful and evil rose
> against my chest and stare,
> and cast wild eyes upon this gathering.[66]

Later, in "Letters of Water," the speaker confesses that everything she has thought to tell the Muse "are languages no more known to me,"[67] and in "A Letter to Charos" she asks the Muse, the "Lord of the midnight river,"[68] if she has thrown her life away, and wonders "into whose future am I moving."[69]

All that the speaker recognizes in this section culminates in her ability to define the true nature of the war. Thus the final poem of the section ("The Telescope Turned Inward") addresses the Muse to whom the speaker says,

> Goodbye, goodbye,
> the planets have resigned
> and left me all alone;
> you have collapsed to a microcosm[70]

For the speaker, "there is no more moon"[71] because all the forces which have been associated with the moon, and with the Muse, she now realizes are within; she has recognized and confronted her enemies.

"Lacus Somniorum: The Lake of Dreams" is the final section of The Armies of the Moon; here, the speaker explains her battle, and although she offers no absolute solutions to the problem of other individuals' inner journeys, she does describe her Muse and state why she underwent this journey. Also included in this section is a collection of nine poems called "The Nine Arcana of the Kings" which retells the kinetic myth of the three main sections in terms of a heroic myth which is identified as the Muse's dream.

The confusion caused by the Muse's many incarnations is dispelled in the opening poem of "The Lake of Dreams." The key to the Muse's unity is found in the prose poem "The Golden Hunger" in which the speaker calls him "composite god,"[72] and "my Teacher."[73] She wants to know how to address him because he is always changing, yet she also recognizes that

> . . . behind your fluid masks there is always something that remains the same. Not a feature, but a *cast* to which the face always returns. I watch your expressions change, I wait until they resolve themselves into the face I remember. Through the eyes of all I know one mind looks out like a dark captured animal, seeing only what it wants to see.[74]

The paradox of being able to have the eyes of all while the mind's eye remains limited, "seeing only what it wants to see," leads the speaker to conclude, "There is the pain of the miracle amid reality."[75] "The Golden Hunger" also reveals where the Muse lives when the speaker asks "Who would believe this ghost is the permanent guest of my blood?"[76]

Once she defines the Muse, the speaker suggests what she wants.

In "House of Mercury," the description of herself associates her with the moon and its armies. She says she wants nothing to do with "Things that speak of forests I have long since lost."[77] Rather, she says,

> Leave me be, I want to be water,
> I'm trying to flow though I'm dense and silver,
> I'm trying to move a ton of metal
> as easily as the sea.[78]

Then, the speaker confesses to the Muse that "you have made a glittering prison/ of all my jewellery,/ you knew I never wanted/ to be free."[79] Following this confession, she informs the Muse that what she is learning "is the lust of God,/ the seas which boil in the bones."[80] Later, the speaker admits,

> Everything would have been different
> had I known it before. I would have had no fear
> of tunnels, thunder, wind and water, also time,
> which brought me always to the brink of being
> and taught me how to love, and die.[81]

She has learned how to love and how to die because "no one can tell [her] that/ the Dancer in [her] blood is/ dead."[82]

Then, just prior to the series of poems which form the final segment of the section, the Muse, in a very uncharacteristic appearance, speaks with the speaker. "Written After Coming Out of a Deep Sleep" is a dialogue which consists of two questions and two answers. First the speaker asks, "How did I see the people of my dream when my eyes were/ closed?"[83] and the Muse responds, "*You saw them with the eyes of your mind.*"[84] Then she asks, "And now that I am awake do I see with my own eyes?"[85] The Muse answers, "*No. You are the eyes of my Mind, and you are here/ to help me see my Dream.*"[86] What follows is the Muse's dream, "The Nine Arcana of the Kings."

At the close of the speaker's inner struggle, the Muse accumulates the hints and guesses he has given to the speaker, and presents them in what he calls his dream. This dream makes the speaker's journey in inner space into a heroic myth which gives the individual, kinetic struggle greater universality. To accomplish this transition, "The Nine Arcana of the Kings" is characterized by a narrative economy which in effect strengthens the narrative of the preceding sections. The kinetic myth of the three main sections is now shaped into a controlled, symbolic narrative which the speaker understands because she has experienced the psychic events of the story herself.

In the Muse's dream, there is a shift in speaker, although except for "Arcanum Eight: The Story" where the prince tells his version of what happens, the speaker is female--the sister of the prince. Thus, there is a correlation between the speaker in the arcana and in the rest of the collection. The primary source for these mysteries of the kings is ancient Egypt, specifically the reign of Akhenaton. MacEwen's secondary source is her own novel, King of Egypt, King of Dreams, which retells Akhenaton's tragic story. This secondary source reveals that the major characters in the arcana are the prince, Smenkhare, and his sister-wife, Meritaton. In fact, in "The Nine Arcana of the Kings" the only deviation from the novel is the statement that the prince murders his father the king.

The story, which was begun in A Breakfast for Barbarians,[87] is a simple one. The prince is married to his sister. He, the sister believes, covets his father's throne and kingdom. His actions lead to his murder and embalming, but not to his actual death for he continues to live in the afterworld. After two millenia he returns to the world which

is a forbidden time because incest is no longer acceptable. Yet, even after this resurrection his obsession with the king has not disappeared; he has only internalized it, and thus at night, he 'returns' to the king, while during the day he is with his sister-wife.

Yet, the tale goes beyond the limitations of a simple story merely told to entertain. For example, images such as an ankh and a beetle identify ancient Egypt as the initial time and place of the tale, but the return of the prince and his sister's living through the centuries give a timelessness to the tale and suggest its continued relevance. Further, the royal brother and sister whose love allows them to succeed against all odds provides an heroic dimension, and the death and return of the prince suggests MacEwen's use of Christian and Greek death-rebirth myths.

Many of the revelations found in the three main sections appear in the arcana and thereby suggest that the tale does re-enact the speaker's journey. For example, the brother-sister relationship recalls Laki's secret knowledge, knowledge that the speaker realizes is simply not faced by the audience. The prince becomes associated with language in the first arcanum. His sister states that "the king entered your body/ into the bracelet of his name/ and you became a living syllable/ in his golden script."[88] Later, when the prince dies his sister bends over him to call his "secret name whose syllables were thunder,"[89] and, then, she throws his crown in the river. In "Arcanum Four: The Embalming," the sister says the prince's name "caused a kingdom's fall."[90] These references to language recall the speaker's earlier difficulty communicating with the Muse whose language she could not remember. After the prince's death, the sister waits "two millenia in the house beside

the river";[91] two thousand years is the amount of time which has passed since we have occupied the stage the speaker defines in "The Holy Burlesque." In "Hypnos" the speaker describes her sleeping lover in terms which sound very much like the sister's description of her dead brother in "Arcanum Four: The Embalming." After the prince dies, he "sometimes . . . visited as bird the thirsty bed,"[92] and he promises "'I will come back in better forms than this,/ my sister,/ but the gates are hard to break."[93] This promise recalls the numerous appearances of the Muse throughout the three main sections. And, like the speaker whose jewellery captured her, the sister wears "around [her] neck a necklace/ of a million suns."[94] The sister's plea and advice in arcanum two suggest that what she wants from the prince is what the speaker in the main sections wanted from the Muse. The sister says,

> O do not go to the king our father
> but stay in this house beside the worried river;
> there are a thousand kingdoms yet to conquer
> in the narrow nights when we lie together,
> and the distant king on his thin and hungry throne
> can neither live nor lie nor sing forever.[95]

Each of the allusions in the arcana suggests that the prince is, in fact, the Muse, and this suggestion becomes stronger when in "Arcanum Eight: The Story" the prince explains why he always went to the king. He says it was because

> his seed struggled in my reluctant thighs
> and the ring on his hand was stone
> and his eyes were the mirrors of the world
> and he was the very lord of gold.[96]

In "The Hour of the Singer" the speaker says of the Muse that "all you have aspired to you have already done/ or seen in the eyes of the Indestructible One."[97] Thus, when the prince says of the king his father

that "his eyes were the mirrors of the world" the reader immediately equates the king his father with the Indestructible One, and the Muse with the prince. Finally, after the prince returns, the sister says of him,

> your seed [is] a river of arrested time
> whose currents bring the cursed crown
> forever back to the foot of this bed--
> the double crown of those who wear
> the kingdoms of heaven and hell on their head.[98]

The "kingdoms of heaven and hell" recall the speaker's realization of the duality of the battle she fought in inner space and which she defined in "It Comes Upon You." "The desire for that crown (of 'the kingdoms of heaven and hell'), like so much of what was once explicit and external to the psyche, has gone inside, exists in 'inner space'."[99] Now the prince's sister asks, "why/ in your dreams do you go to the king, the king?"[100] The sister, although she understands much of what happens to her brother the prince, remains mystified, and therefore must ask why he returns to the king his father in his dreams.

The journey of The Armies of the Moon is both imaginary and real, and is applicable to both all of modern civilization and the individual. The two framing poems illustrate the clash of the imaginary and the real in outer space in terms which implicate everyone; the three main sections dramatize the speaker's individual struggle with inner space. The final series of poems in the third section reveals how the battles in inner space and outer space are recurring and therefore relevant to the past, the present, and the future. MacEwen's successful blurring of the boundaries between the imaginary and the real allows her to dramatize these struggles, and she keeps the drama alive and moving

toward its resolution through the shape-changing Muse who offers the speaker hints and guesses of what she seeks. Thus, by processes similar to the workings of myth, The Armies of the Moon illustrates how myth is kinetic, and how modern man can use myth to explore those aspects of himself and his universe he cannot otherwise accept, comprehend, or master.

CHAPTER IV

MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE JOURNALS OF SUSANNA MOODIE

In a review of Atwood's Selected Poems, George Woodcock states, "The whole of The Journals of Susanna Moodie is there, and this is a good decision, since in fragments the work loses its mythic impetus; it is essentially a long poem on the Canadian sensibility refracted through history."[1] In 1977, in an article titled "The Poetry of Margaret Atwood," John Wilson Foster comments, "The Journals of Susanna Moodie, like Atwood's other volumes, records how the settlers who dared invade the primal and aboriginal wilderness are in turn invaded and repossessed."[2] Both statements suggest the organizing principle, the structure, and the theme of Atwood's volume, and although such comments are occasionally found in discussions of other Atwood volumes and in discussions of Atwood's poetry in general, no extended analysis of the interaction of all three in The Journals exists. Yet, as Woodcock and Foster imply, delete any one of the three and the essence of the volume is diminished, if not lost. Through the extensive use of documents, coupled with the presentation of Moodie as Persephone, and the Triple Goddess Diana, Venus, Hecate, Atwood creates a Canadian myth which portrays "our national schizophrenia not simply as illness or weakness, but as our greatest potential strength--accepted and controlled it provides the wisdom of double vision."[3]

The Journals of Susanna Moodie (1970) is Atwood's interpretation of Susanna Moodie's experiences as a nineteenth century Canadian pioneer

and is based upon Atwood's readings of Moodie's Roughing It in the Bush and Life in the Clearings. Although Atwood says, ". . . the poems can be read in connection with Mrs Moodie's books, they don't have to be: they have detached themselves from the books in the same way that other poems detach themselves from the events that give rise to them,"[4] Moodie's books are clearly Atwood's source; they are the documents which provide facts about Susanna Moodie's pioneer life.

Atwood, however, does not adopt the dramatic autobiographical format of Roughing It in the Bush or the "less autobiographical and more self-conscious"[5] style of Life in the Clearings. Rather, she chooses to recreate the material from her sources in three sequential journals. But if journals are a daily record of what one thinks, feels, or notices, then The Journals of Susanna Moodie is not a sequence of ordinary journals. These journals are not merely Moodie's record; they are Atwood's delineation of Moodie's struggle to come to terms with herself, with others, and with a new and alien land. Atwood, therefore, selects, controls, and adds to the material in the documents as she transforms Moodie from an historical personage to a heroine who is not only the struggling pioneer, but the spirit of the land itself. For Atwood, Moodie's struggle with her divided spirit provides the dynamic impetus necessary for her transformation. The material Atwood selects to illustrate Moodie's struggle she arranges in journals which impose an external structure, an exoskeleton, temporally limited by the years Moodie lived in Canada, years which are described in Atwood's documents. Atwood's control of the material, and her desire to give modern relevance to Moodie's struggle, however, means that the chronology of The Journals is not restricted by either the years covered by Moodie's books, or the

date of Moodie's actual death. This extension of the chronology is reflected in the title of the third journal ("Journal III 1871-1969") which offers an unusual temporal span of eighty-eight years.

Atwood's adaptation of the journal provides the historical frame for the volume. The use of the word "journal" in the volume's title and in the titles of the three sections implies chronology and Atwood makes it a particular chronology by indicating the years covered by each of the journals: "Journal I 1832-1840"; "Journal II 1840-1871"; "Journal III 1871-1969." Atwood's choice of dates, particularly for the first journal, coincides exactly with the years Moodie writes about in Roughing it in the Bush, and the other two journals take up issues raised by Moodie in Life in the Clearings and Roughing it in the Bush. Thus, the simplest movement of the work is chronological; the volume begins with events in 1832 and progresses in an intermittent but still linear fashion to 1969. The reader's sense of chronology is given further force by the ordering of the poems; Atwood arranges events in their order of occurrence. For example, "Departure from the Bush" appears after "Further Arrivals" because Moodie must be in the bush before she can leave it. Thus the chronology implied by the adoption of a "journal," plus the logic of chronology reflected in the ordering of the poems creates the general shape of Atwood's book.

Roughing it in the Bush, first published in England in two volumes in 1852 and reprinted in Toronto and Montreal in 1871, is a series of autobiographical sketches dramatizing the nine years the Moodies lived in the bush. The action occurs in two localities: from 1832 to 1834 temporary settlement was made on cleared farm land near Cobourg and from 1834 to 1840 the Moodies lived on an uncleared farm in Douro, north

of Peterborough on the Otonabee river system. In 1840 the Moodies moved to Belleville and Roughing it in the Bush ends with their departure from the now cleared farm and arrival in Belleville. Because these sketches are autobiographical, Susanna Moodie's presence, her sense of herself as a character, pervades the entire work and the force of her experiences dominates each sketch.

Life in the Clearings was first published in England in 1853; a Canadian edition did not appear until 1959. As Moodie says, this sequel to her first book is ". . . an account of the present state of society in the colony and . . . [points] out its increasing prosperity and commercial advantages. . . ."[6] Although Life in the Clearings is occasioned by her visit to Niagara Falls,

> . . . its chief purpose was to be to provide a peg on which to hang anecdotes, mostly anonymous and second-hand . . . , and a series of observations about society. What remains to be said here is that the book which was the outgrowth of all these conditions can hardly be expected to reproduce the confessional strength of Roughing it in the Bush, any more than it can be expected to reproduce the dramatic appeal of the earlier narrative of primitive struggle. And of course it does not.[7]

The different styles of Roughing it in the Bush and Life in the Clearings assist Atwood in her desire to ground her journals in history, even though she moves beyond the confines of her document's historical frame. Roughing it in the Bush lends itself to chronological use because of the immediacy of the action and Moodie's sense of herself as a character. Thus, "Journal I" directly tracks the years discussed in Roughing it in the Bush. However, because of the subject matter and Moodie's tendency to be self-effacing, Life in the Clearings does not lend itself to chronological use. The sense of historical grounding established in "Journal I" is carried over to "Journal II" which deals with Moodie's

life after she has left the bush; life in Canada's cities and towns is the general topic of Life in the Clearings, but here Atwood only begins with the years discussed in Moodie's book. This second journal ends in 1871, a year which Life in the Clearings cannot include because it was published in 1853. "Journal II" extends beyond the loosely defined historical boundary of Moodie's second book. This is Atwood's first departure from the historical confines of her documents. The entire third journal extends beyond the historical time span of Moodie's books. Here, Atwood ignores the limitations of physical life (Moodie in fact dies in the fifth poem of the section) and uses the accumulated evidence of Moodie's thoughts, feelings, and observations to complete Moodie's transformation and to illustrate how Moodie continues to exist in 1969.

Atwood finds in Moodie's books historical evidence of Moodie's split personality. But as an artist, Atwood is less interested in listing the separate pieces of evidence than in using that evidence to help her formulate and present her theory of what Moodie in fact represents. As a reader of Moodie's books, Atwood learns of the difficulties Moodie faced as a pioneer. As an artist, she is interested in how the difficulties affect Moodie's thoughts, feelings, and observations. Thus, Atwood selects and combines those incidents from Moodie's records which generate individual poems. In fact, Atwood's borrowings are so extensive that detailing them will establish that Atwood relies less on invention than on attentive reworking. For example, every poem in "Journal I" echoes one or more incidents in Roughing it in the Bush. "Disembarking at Quebec" and "Further Arrivals" correspond to the first three chapters of Moodie's book which establish her arrival in Canada and her journey inland. "First Neighbours" logically occurs after the Moodies' arrival in the

wilderness, but here Atwood combines several sketches. The poem describes a series of incidents which point out Mrs Moodie's ignorance of life in the bush: for burning her bread, she is "jeered at"[8] by a "girl in a red tattered/ petticoat"[9] who wants her to go back where she came from; England "had sunk down into the sea/ without ever teaching [her] about washtubs"[10] and an Indian laughs when she asks if he is drying a toad on a stick by the fire. Moodie did burn bread, but the girl in the red petticoat was not present; the incident with the washtub occurs in the chapter following the bread burning, and, near the end of Roughing it in the Bush, in a chapter entitled "A Change in Our Prospects" another woman, not Susanna Moodie, is laughed at when she asks the Indian if he is drying a toad. "The Planters" opens with an image of three men weeding the few rows of vegetables which have managed to grow "on a stumpy patch of cleared land."[11] Here, Atwood chooses to emphasize the difficulty of farming by heightening Moodie's references to the toil involved in the hand planting and weeding of potatoes and beans. "The Wereman" expresses the particular anxiety Susanna Moodie felt when her husband left the cabin; Atwood points to Moodie's fears by forcing her to contemplate the nature of individual perception more consciously than the historical Susanna Moodie ever did. "The Wereman" implicitly communicates the way backwoods' life changes people like the Moodies who were of "a class perfectly unfitted by their previous habits and education for contending with the stern realities of emigrant life."[12] In "Paths and Thingscape" where some dream "of birds flying in the shapes/ of letters"[13] and of "the significance of numbers (count/ petals of certain flowers)"[14] and where Moodie is "watched like an invader/ who knows hostility but/ not where,"[15] Atwood combines issues from three chapters of Roughing it in

the Bush: Brian in "Brian, the Still-Hunter" dreams of the animals and the vegetation; "The Wilderness, and Our Indian Friends" describes how the Indians are the only people who do not get lost in the dense forest where there are no paths, and in "A Journey to the Woods" the Moodies travel to their bush farm and a frightened Susanna Moodie says, "I gazed through tears upon the singularly savage scene around me, and secretly marvelled, 'What brought me here?'"[16] "The Two Fires " unites two separate scenes from Roughing it in the Bush, as Atwood describes one of Moodie's first experiences of double vision. The "summer fire/ outside"[17] alludes to the disastrous attempt to burn the fallow in "Burning the Fallow" and "the winter/ fire inside"[18] makes reference to the overheating of the wood stove which nearly destroys the cabin in "The Fire." When Susanna Moodie discovers her family is to move to Belleville, she says, in the second last chapter of Roughing it in the Bush, "For seven years I had lived out of the world entirely; my person had been rendered coarse by hard work and exposure to the weather."[19] These feelings Atwood heightens in the poem "Looking in a Mirror" when Moodie states, "It was as if I woke/ after a sleep of seven years/ to find stiff lace, religious/ black rotted/ off by earth and the strong waters/ . . ./ and the sun here had stained/ me its barbarous colour."[20] The final poem in "Journal I," "Departure from the Bush," echoes, in both its title and the mixed feelings of relief to be leaving the bush and sadness at leaving what had become home, the final chapter of Roughing it in the Bush, "Adieu to the Woods."

In "Journal II" seven of the nine poems allude to incidents in Moodie's books, and again, Roughing it in the Bush provides Atwood with most of her material. In fact, only two poems, "Death of a Young Son by

Drowning" and "The Double Voice" refer to incidents in Life in the Clearings. In "Death of a Young Son by Drowning" Moodie, who describes her son's death, finds that her loss is also her gain; when she says, "I planted him in this country/ like a flag",[21] she not only describes her son's burial but claims the land for her own. In the poem, the significance of the death of this son is emphasized by Moodie's description of the effect of the death on her, but in Life in the Clearings the incident is barely mentioned. In Life in the Clearings, Susanna Moodie, when giving an account of the swift current of the Moira river, says of her son's death: "Oh, agony unspeakable! The writer of this lost a fine talented boy of six years--one to whom her soul clave--in those cruel waters. But I will not dwell upon that dark hour, the saddest and darkest in my sad, eventful life."[22] Atwood finds Moodie's suppressed response inadequately captures the effect of Moodie's loss; she therefore picks up on Moodie's use of superlatives to describe her loss, and in The Journals gives this event what she feels is its proper treatment. Thus, what is a short and passing reference to a personal loss in Life in the Clearings Atwood turns into an important transition point in Moodie's life. "The Double Voice" is the last poem in "Journal II" and the only other poem in this second journal to make reference to Life in the Clearings. "The Double Voice" also mentions incidents from Roughing it in the Bush. In the poem, Moodie defines the two voices which "took turns using [her] eyes."[23] One voice "had manners"[24] while the "other voice/ had other knowledge."[25] The definitions of "manners" and "other knowledge" clearly separate Moodie's civilized aspects (the sensitivity and sentimentality she can openly express about nature when the hardships of nature do not threaten her) from her uncivilized aspects (the facts

about the cruelty and harshness of nature she was forced to confront while living in the bush). Since Roughing it in the Bush presents the hardships of life in the backwoods, Atwood combines several of the more gruesome episodes from the work to define the "other voice"; and since Life in the Clearings is occasioned by a trip to Niagara Falls which in turn gives Moodie a chance to express the beauty of nature and the state of society in the colony, Atwood alludes to this book for her definition of "manners."

Three poems in "Journal II" are presented as dreams and take up issues from Roughing it in the Bush. "Dream 1: The Bush Garden" places Moodie back on the bush farm. In this dream, Moodie, who can "see down through the earth"[26] describes the vegetables growing beneath the soil. The image of "the potatoes curled/ like pale grubs"[27] reminds the reader of the poem "The Planters" in "Journal I." Both the allusion to the garden and the allusion to the potatoes are from Roughing it in the Bush. Here Atwood as artist has intuited the hardship of the general situation. "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter" takes its title from a chapter heading in Roughing it in the Bush. In the poem, the still-hunter relates how, when he shoots an animal, he acquires the animals' physical characteristics. In the book, Moodie describes in detail Brian's ability to hunt and her fascination with his quietness. At one point, when the hunter tells Moodie about his life he asks, "Is God just to his creatures?"[28] In the poem, Atwood quotes this line. This is the only place in the volume Atwood actually quotes Moodie. In "Dream 3: Night Bear Which Frightened Cattle" Moodie empathizes with the bear and tries to imagine the bear's movements. In the chapter entitled "The Fires" in Roughing it in the Bush, the Moodies are awakened by their animals who are frightened by a

bear, but the danger does not seem too great, and, in fact, this episode is only a minor incident in the chapter.

Finally, two other poems in the second journal have their sources in Roughing it in the Bush. "1837 War in Retrospect" gives an account of Moodie's response to the war; she draws a picture of the effect the war will have in the future rather than presenting precise issues or describing any battles. In Roughing it in the Bush, Susanna Moodie concentrates on her feelings of isolation and loneliness because the war takes her husband, who is a British soldier, from the farm to fight for the British forces. Here, Atwood changes Moodie's initial personal and selfish response to the war to a more distanced and objective consideration of the flow of history. In "Charivari" Atwood again adopts the title of a chapter in Roughing it in the Bush, but the poem concentrates on only the most ghastly example of a charivari given in Moodie's book.

In "Journal III" only three poems draw on material from the documents. In "Later in Belleville: Career" the period of time suggested by the title and Moodie's sitting "on a stuffed sofa/ in [her] own fringed parlour"[29] is that of Life in the Clearings; the allusions to the exchange of verses for potatoes and the "painted butterflies/ on a species of white fungus"[30] which were sold to get money to buy the children shoes are from Roughing it in the Bush. "Visit to Toronto, With Companions" is based on Moodie's visit to an insane asylum, which she describes in Life in the Clearings. Finally, "Thoughts from Underground" begins with a summary of what life was like in the bush (which is why Moodie writes Roughing it in the Bush) and ends with an attempt to praise Canada (which is the topic of Life in the Clearings).

The Journals of Susanna Moodie, therefore, reflects Moodie's books in two ways. First, Roughing it in the Bush and Life in the Clearings provide the historical frame which reinforces the chronology established by Atwood's adaptation of the journal. This historically grounded chronology functions as an exoskeleton which not only provides the poems with a sense of direction, but also with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Second, Moodie's personal dramas and descriptions furnish Atwood with the raw materials which generate her poem. In fact, only eight of the twenty-seven poems in the journals are not based on the documents.

However, while Atwood adopts the historical chronology of Moodie's books to establish the exoskeleton, she does not strictly conform to the chronology of the material she recreates in the poem. Atwood does not simply reproduce her documents; her interest lies in the attitude towards Nature and Canada she discovers in Moodie's narratives. Atwood makes this point: "I suppose many of them [the poems] were suggested by Mrs Moodie's books, though it was not her conscious voice but the other voice running like a counterpoint through her work that made the most impression on me."[31] This is not simple concession. Atwood's "impression" is in fact a critical judgement of her narrative sources, and what she discerns as a critic, she makes use of as an artist. As critic, Atwood's insight is that Moodie's own narrative voice betrays inconsistencies in attitude of which the lady seems unaware. As artist, Atwood undertakes to expose and emphasize, in her recreation of Moodie, the divided consciousness thus revealed. Here is Atwood's reading of Moodie's inconsistencies.

> . . . she praises the Canadian landscape but accuses it of destroying her; she dislikes the people already in Canada but finds in people her only refuge from the land itself; she preaches progress and the march of civilization while brooding elegiacally upon the destruction of the wilderness; she delivers optimistic sermons while showing herself to be fascinated with deaths, murders, the criminals in Kingston Penitentiary and the incurably insane in the Toronto lunatic asylum. She claims to be an ardent Canadian patriot while all the time she is standing back from the country and criticizing it as though she were a detached observer, a stranger.[32]

While these five contradictions summarize, in general terms, the major issues in Roughing it in the Bush and Life in the Clearings, they also define for Atwood Moodie's character and this act of definition provides Atwood with her central task, the exploration of the psychic consequences of Moodie's confrontation with the land.

In a 1977 essay on Atwood's poetry, John Wilson Foster suggests that ". . . in The Journals of Susanna Moodie Atwood has, as it were, read between the lines of Roughing it in the Bush in order to re-create the assault upon the pióneer psyche."[33] Although Foster correctly identifies Atwood's theme, his figure of reading between the lines oversimplifies her use of documents. Atwood, in fact, is offering a critical reading of her sources; that is, she is reading not between the lines, but the lines themselves. By selecting, recombining, and rearranging incidents, tones, images, etc. from Moodie's two books, she means to make explicit what she has found to be implicit in Moodie's texts.

Dorothy Livesay believes there is a more complex interaction between the poet and his documents. In an essay on the documentary poem, Livesay explains that "What interests me in these developments is the evidence they present of a conscious attempt to create a dialectic between the objective facts and the subjective feelings of the poet."[34] In spite of the fact that Livesay does not define "dialectic" and although

she is not discussing Atwood's poetry, her statement is helpful when applied to The Journals of Susanna Moodie. Obviously, the "objective facts" are those incidents reported in Moodie's books and directly borrowed by Atwood. But it is an act of making a critical judgement about those books which brings into play Atwood's feelings, and this critical judgement is expressed in Atwood's desire to capture, and in an important sense, expose Moodie's divided spirit. The dialectic finds its shape from Atwood's conscious attempt to dramatize the implications of Moodie's contradictory attitudes by using incidents from the documents to substantiate her view. Thus, in The Journals of Susanna Moodie, the dialectic is the reworking of original material to emphasize Atwood's major insight into Moodie's consciousness, and this relationship between poet's perception and facts upon which it works allows Atwood to move beyond the confines of her historical frame and make herself the medium through which Susanna Moodie is brought back to life.

Atwood thus recreates Mrs Moodie in a very literal sense. Atwood not only revives Moodie's voice in the twentieth century, she gives expression to what had been submerged in the record of the nineteenth century voice. While Moodie's confrontations with the land and the people she meets there form the subject of Atwood's book, Atwood uses what she sees as the consequences of those confrontations to move the reborn Moodie beyond the boundaries of history into the realm of myth. Atwood suggests that this is the case when she states that this split in attitude towards Nature and Canada is not confined to Moodie: ". . . what struck me most about this personality [Moodie's] was the way in which it reflects many of the obsessions still with us."[35] The reflection is made even more precise. Atwood states flatly that "the national mental

illness . . . of Canada is paranoid schizophrenia"[36] and in the following sentence she states that "Mrs. Moodie is divided down the middle."[37] Such juxtaposition makes Moodie not only part of a pattern, but the embodiment of the pattern, and, therefore, exploration and explication of Moodie's "illness" becomes exploration and explication of Canada's "illness." Moodie can no longer be defined simply as historic personage; she has become, in fact, the representative of the Canadian psyche. As a critic, Atwood discerns Moodie's "illness"; as an artist, she expresses that illness by recreating the Moodie persona as a voice progressively more self-aware. It is a curious and effective fusion in which the self-awareness comes to be shared by Moodie, Atwood, and the reader as it is expressed. Thus is Moodie reborn from historical personage to representative heroine.

In the short, untitled poem which prefaces the journals, Atwood describes the manner of Moodie's imaginative rebirth:

> I take this picture of myself
> and with my sewing scissors
> cut out the face.
>
> Now it is more accurate:
>
> where my eyes were,
> every-
> thing appears[38]

The poem appears prior to the first journal and is not, therefore, to be considered part of Moodie's journals. But it does indicate something of the complexity of the relationship between Moodie and Atwood. Because Atwood is the creator of the journals, and because she wishes to give voice to a previously unexposed attitude in Moodie, she undergoes the operation described above which leaves a blank where her face and her

eyes were. Atwood cannot merely present material from Moodie's books in exactly the same way it appeared in the books because such a presentation would not expose the attitude in Moodie which is of greatest interest to Atwood. Yet she cannot speak entirely in her own voice, she cannot even intrude as herself because, if she does, the journals cease to be Susanna Moodie's. Atwood must, however, select, shape, and control both Moodie's material and the material she, Atwood, adds in order to make Moodie's transformation complete. Atwood therefore wants to show how she sees what Moodie saw, only more clearly, and she wants to keep the advantage of living in the twentieth century so that she can see what Moodie sees after her transformation is complete. Thus, the void created by her operation is replaced by "every-/ thing," or, more specifically, by the scenes which make up the journals. Atwood makes it clear that what she offers is not herself but the encounters and responses experienced if not always understood by Susanna Moodie, plus Moodie's responses and experiences after she dies. By substituting scenes from Moodie's life for her own eyes, she simultaneously adopts the Moodie persona and accomplishes the rebirth of Moodie's originally incomplete consciousness while she retains control over the material.[39]

Once Atwood's imaginative stance affirms Moodie's rebirth, Atwood can recreate the original incidents, confrontations, and responses from her perspective, which, of course, is Moodie's perspective of renewed understanding. The structure of the journals is thus designed as a particular ordering or, more properly, reordering of experience in order to show the steps by which Moodie would have, or could have, or should have, come to the awareness with which Atwood can now endow her. The sequence of the poems is not, therefore, arbitrary, for each suggests a

step in Moodie's transformation, her development of an awareness. To further assist in the delineation of the steps in Moodie's transformation, Atwood presents Moodie in three distinct stages, almost as three separate personalities, each one of which corresponds to one of the three journals. These personalities are represented by the Triple Goddess, Diana, Venus, Hecate.[40] In Survival, Atwood explains this goddess's role:

> Robert Graves, in The White Goddess, divides Woman into three mythological categories or identities. First comes the elusive Diana or Maiden figure, the young girl; next the Venus figure, goddess of love, sex and fertility; then the Hecate figure, called by Graves the Crone, goddess of the underworld, who presides over death and has oracular powers. In Graves' mythology, the three phases together constitute the Triple Goddess, who is the Muse, the inspirer of poetry; she is also Nature, a goddess of cycles and seasons. Hecate, the most forbidding of the three, is only one phase of a cycle; she is not sinister when viewed as part of a process. . . .[41]

The first phase of the cycle, represented by Diana, corresponds to "Journal I" where Moodie is a young woman, a chaste maiden who resists becoming part of the land. The third phase corresponds to "Journal III"; here, Moodie becomes Hecate, the goddess of the underworld who presides over the dead. In "Journal II," however, the correlation between Moodie and the second phase represented by Venus breaks down. In Survival, Atwood says that in Canadian literature, "There is a notable absence of Venuses."[42] Atwood's Moodie follows the usual pattern, then; she virtually misses the Venus phase, as she struggles with her love-hate relationship with the land. Yet, because Moodie clearly is Atwood's Muse, the person who inspires Atwood to write this volume of poetry, and because Moodie becomes part of the land, actually becomes Nature, Atwood's Moodie corresponds to the combined three phases which constitute the Triple Goddess. The phases of the cycle, plus the particular associations

of the Triple Goddess help Atwood transform Moodie. Moodie becomes what the Triple Goddess represents, and thereby evolves to a status which is more than that of the historical personage Atwood first discovers in her documents. The Moodie revealed in The Journals, however, represents even more than just the Triple Goddess. In her manifestation as Hecate, Moodie's classical counterpart is also Persephone, which accounts for Moodie's ability to live underground and to appear periodically in the world. Each personality from mythology suggests to Atwood particular characteristics which she then gives to Moodie. Once Atwood endows Moodie with these characteristics, the transformation from historical personage to representative of the Canadian psyche is much easier for Atwood to illustrate.

"Journal I 1832-1840" presents Moodie's immediate experience of the land. "Disembarking at Quebec" explores Moodie's acute and sudden sense of alienation from several perspectives. She first becomes aware that appearance sets her apart from the land:

> Is it my clothes, my way of walking,
> the things I carry in my hand
> --a book, a bag with knitting--
> the incongruous pink of my shawl
>
> this space cannot hear[43]

Then she speculates that it might be her own inner condition which turns the "promised land" into a kind of northern hell:

> or is it my own lack
> of conviction which makes
> these vistas of desolation,
> long hills, the swamps, the barren sand, the glare
>
> of sun on the bone-white
> driftlogs, omens of winter,
> the moon alien in day-
> time a thin refusal[44]

These two questions pit Moodie against the land. But because these first responses are questions, she is obviously trying to define and understand her position. Unfortunately, these explorations fail to supply positive answers, especially when she views the reactions of the other immigrants:

> The others leap, shout
> Freedom![45]

Moodie alone seems unable to share this perspective; in fact, when she turns again to the land, for others the source of freedom, she can only sense her exclusion:

> The moving water will not show me
> my reflection.
>
> the rocks ignore.
> I am a word
> in a foreign language.[46]

Moodie's first encounter with her new home accentuates her loneliness; she simply feels there is no place or no space for her.

The rest of the poems in this first journal explore her experiences as an ignorant and alien immigrant/pioneer, and, at the end of this section, Moodie still can feel no ties to the land. For example, "Further Arrivals" takes Moodie into the bush. The alienation felt in the beginning is now reinforced by an isolation which Moodie likens to darkness and ignorance:

> [we] entered a large darkness.
>
> It was our own
> ignorance we entered.[47]

This stripping away of the "civilized/ distinctions"[48] firmly keeps the problem inward. For the immigrants, the movement into the wilderness becomes a movement into the self which can no longer be defined by

previous knowledge. This is especially true for Moodie who says, "I have not come out yet"[49] and who describes her ignorance in terms of fear of the wild:

> My brain gropes nervous
> tentacles in the night, sends out
> fears hairy as bears,
> demands lamps; or waiting
>
> for my shadowy husband, hears
> malice in the trees' whispers.[50]

Moodie now acknowledges, however, that if she is to accept and understand the bush she needs "wolf's eyes";[51] although Moodie says she is still ignorant, she intuitively knows that if a kind of metamorphosis were possible, she would gain companionable knowledge of the woods. This sense of what companionable knowledge would make possible leads Moodie to reject the previously desired but withheld reflection of herself in the river. Now she says, "I refuse to look in a mirror";[52] she will not define her presence by observing a reflected image of herself. Although Foster is generally correct when he states that "Atwood's poetry is filled with reflective surfaces--mirrors, eyes, glass, photographs. They suggest how we merely 'surface'--float, skate or cast reflections--through life, rarely penetrating behind or below,"[53] his statement ignores an important implication of the mirror image in "Further Arrivals." Here, Moodie's refusal to look in a mirror implies a refusal to accept mere surface. This involvement with areas below surfaces recalls the previously stated need for metamorphosis and suggests a desire to penetrate both her ignorance and the wilderness. However, this refusal to accept surfaces simultaneously furthers her feelings of total exclusion; she will not define herself by her appearance because she

wishes "to see/ the truth"[54] and yet she is fearful of the land which might reflect a new image of herself, one unconditioned by her previous understanding. The complexity of her position she implies at the end of the poem in a definition of the wilderness:

> Whether the wilderness is
> real or not
> depends on who lives there.[55]

This is the first instance in which any positive feeling for the wilderness has filtered through Moodie's intensely egocentric response to the wild. Because this is the first time Moodie has suspended her defensive reactions to the bush, this definition weakens what has hitherto been an almost total rejection of the bush. Moodie's acknowledgement of her ignorance clears the way for her to "see" without prejudice, without the preoccupying clutter of habit and English convention. Her attempt to see what is there in the new environment is also partly the result of her fear of the alien and alienating bush. Presumably, and paradoxically, this fear is the cause of a new attentiveness to that which is feared, and thus the dual response, the first concrete step in Atwood's development of Mrs Moodie's divided consciousness, points toward the possibility of an integration of personality and land.

The next three poems concentrate on Moodie's response to the people she encounters in the bush. Her sense of isolation is somewhat relieved, but her sense of alienation is as strong as ever. For example, in "First Neighbours" the Indians and the people Moodie lives among prove that whether or not the wilderness is real is indeed dependent on who lives there. Others seem to cope well and this only strengthens Moodie's sense of alienation. The people who inhabit the area are "unforgivingly/ previous"[56] not because, as Sid Stephen says "those neighbours are not

<u>really there</u> at all,"[57] but because they have learned the ways of the wilderness and speak a "twisted dialect to [Moodie's] differently-/ shaped ears"[58] which allows them to laugh at and cheat her. She says she "tried to adapt,"[59] but now she finds people as well as the land alien to her, and concludes that "prediction is forever impossible."[60]

In "The Planters" Moodie believes the settlers are able to work so hard because they ignore the facts and believe only that Canada is the promised land. Because Moodie does not "pretend this dirt is the future,"[61] and because the land cannot hold that illusion for her, she again sees herself alienated from both land and people. In fact, the land becomes an enemy which tries to capture, invade, and possess her. Moodie clearly understands that the illusion of grandeur is the only barrier between the land and all the people; still, she is the one who acknowledges the power of the land:

> If they let go
> of that illusion solid to them as a shovel,
>
> open their eyes even for a moment
> to these trees, to this particular sun
> they would be surrounded, stormed, broken
>
> in upon by branches, roots, tendrils, the dark
> side of light
> as I am.[62]

Once Moodie has explored the perspectives of others, once she defines her alienation in terms of people and their response to the land, she returns to her consideration of the bush.

"Paths and Thingscape" contrasts those people to whom the land gives signs with herself who is

. . . watched like an invader
who knows hostility but

not where[63]

At the beginning of this poem, Moodie defines the signals which she cannot interpret:

Those who went ahead
of us in the forest
bent the early trees
so that they grew to signals:

the trail was not
among the trees but
the trees

and there are some who have dreams
of birds flying in the shapes
of letters; the sky's
codes;
and dream also
the significance of numbers (count
petals of certain flowers)[64]

Mrs. Moodie feels she is an invader because she cannot distinguish the trees which mark the trail from the trees which are growing in the woods, because she does not know the significance of the bird formations, and because the number of petals on certain flowers means nothing to her. This does not mean, however, that she wishes to stay the invader; in fact, in the final stanza of the poem, Moodie clearly states her desire to form a union with the land:

When will be
that union and each
thing (bits
of surface broken by my foot
step) will without moving move
around me
into its place[65]

At the end of "Paths and Thingscape" Moodie finds herself in a frustrating and confusing predicament. Because she fails to understand

nature's signals and codes, she feels she is an invader, yet she also desires what she now sees as an inevitable union with nature. This situation marks the second concrete step in Atwood's development of Moodie's divided consciousness. Earlier, Moodie's fear had aroused a new attentiveness which led to her close observation of those who inhabited the land. Precisely what was feared was unclear; she was generally anxious about how to cope with a land and people foreign to her. Now, as she returns to her consideration of the land, she realizes what she fears; she identifies the cause of her anxiety as the land itself and sees union with the land as the means to dispel her fear. Unfortunately, defining the fear is not enough.

Now what she fears is clear to her, Moodie's major problem is how to break nature's code--a code which because it is fully developed by the time she arrives in the bush functions as a barrier to rather than a key to her understanding and her union. Thus, Moodie must discover some way of returning to the time when the early trees were bent to grow to signals so that she can learn and grow with the signs. In "The Two Fires," fire effectively solves this difficulty by destroying the mature growth. Moodie's survival necessitates a new beginning which, at least potentially, will make her part of the young and growing environment.

In the poem, after her account of the fires (one outside in the forest, and one which consumed the cabin) she concisely defines her new position.

> Two fires in-
> formed me,
>
> (each refuge fails
> us; each danger
> becomes a haven)

left charred marks
now around which I
try to grow[66]

Her next task is to discover if the potential growth is realized.

Moodie does grow; in fact, she realizes she had been growing all along, but not quite in the way she expected. In "Looking In A Mirror" Moodie, for the first time in seven years, looks at her reflection and compares her remembered image to what she sees now.

It was as if I woke
after a sleep of seven years

to find stiff lace, religious
black rotted
off by earth and the strong waters

and instead my skin thickened
with bark and the white hairs of roots[67]

She further particularizes her physical transformation--her fingers are "brittle as twigs"[68] and her eyes are "almost/ blind/ buds, which can see/ only the wind."[69] Even her mouth cracks "open like a rock in fire"[70] as she tries to ask "What is this?"[71] She is a tree and is duly shocked.

Initially, Moodie believes that the fires bring a renewal of a cycle which will give her access to nature's codes. But, when she looks in the mirror, she discovers that union with nature means becoming nature, that her physical growth appears to be complete; she is a tree and she is startled by her transformation.

When Moodie first arrived in the bush, she refused to look in a natural mirror for fear the land would reflect an unfamiliar image of herself, and obviously she was right to be afraid. This fear, rooted in a mode of expression brought with her from England, has now been defined; Mrs Moodie has become conscious of a new, or at least a different, image

of herself; she has given a voice to the wilderness. The problem now is how to continue to express a consciousness which English habit and convention does not even acknowledge. Moodie does the only thing she can --she analyzes her life in the bush in terms of the image she sees in the mirror.

However, as an artist who must control Moodie's gradually growing awareness and as an artist who wishes to reveal the lady's divided consciousness, Atwood's problem is more complicated than her persona's, for she must make both reader and Moodie aware of a change in consciousness, a change which is not only natural and logical but which also fulfills Moodie's desire to become part of the land, while not totally eliminating either her fear or her previous understanding of herself and the land. Atwood solves the problem by using two mythic patterns, one of which brings Moodie to a new level of consciousness and one which transforms Moodie into her environment.

Atwood's initial problem is to make Moodie conscious of the fact that her desired union already exists--at least physically. To accomplish this shift in consciousness, Atwood has Moodie liken her seven years in the bush to a long sleep from which she awakens. The simile is an apt one since in sleep consciousness is nearly suspended, and awakening to find a desire satisfied, as both Campbell and Frazer point out,[72] is, in myth and fairy tale, a common consequence of sleep, particularly a protracted sleep. Thus, Moodie awakens to find that physical union with nature has been accomplished. To make this point clear, Atwood transforms Moodie into a dryad, which makes her the environment she has feared for so long.

While Mrs Moodie is horrified to discover she is a tree, she

does admit the truth of her change:

> (You find only
> the shape you already are
> but what
> if you have forgotten that
> or discover you
> have never known)[73]

Once the mirror forces Moodie to see what she already is, she can describe not only how she became the tree but also the consequences of being the environment.

"Departure From the Bush" begins with her metamorphosis:

> I, who had been erased
> by fire, was crept in
> upon by green
> (how
> lucid a season)[74]

This transition effectively makes Moodie capable of being lived in, capable of being invaded. As she says,

> In time the animals
> arrived to inhabit me,
>
> first one
> by one, stealthily
> (their habitual traces
> burnt); then
> having marked new boundaries
> returning, more
> confident, year
> by year, two
> by two[75]

However, Mrs Moodie "was not ready/ altogether to be moved into."[76] She accepts what she is but at this time does not know how to cope with the consequences of her change; as a tree she lacks sufficient roots to hold up her cluttered branches:

They could tell I was
too heavy: I might
capsize:[77]

Now Mrs Moodie, who identified herself with the land she once feared, is afraid of what is inside her and she once again discovers that her conventional knowledge fails her. "I was not completed; at night/ I could not see without lanterns."[78] In a very real sense, her previous understanding of the animals both saves her and frightens her. Earlier, fear of the environment led to a new attentiveness which brought forth her first dual response. Now, fear of the animals, their invasion, potentially leads to an attentiveness which would again expand her understanding. Unfortunately, this potential is unrealized; Moodie is saved from confronting this new fear when she and her family leave the bush:

The sleigh was a relief;
its track lengthened behind,
pushing me toward the city

and rounding the first hill, I was
(instantaneous)
unlived in: they had gone[79]

However, Moodie cannot forget the animals, and thus, at the end of this poem, she laments their departure:

There was something they almost taught me
I came away not having learned.[80]

Moodie again expresses a double response to her situation. Because she fears what she does not know or understand, she finds relief at being able to return to an environment she does understand, but, at the same time, she regrets not having learned what the animals almost taught her and she cannot ignore being drawn toward that environment which constantly

causes her fear.

"Departure From the Bush" closes "Journal I" by reporting the trip which takes Moodie out of the bush and back to civilization. By the time Moodie leaves, she realizes that her attempts to resist the bush are not only futile, but also undesired; she finds that she does not want to stop being invaded by the land. Moodie has begun her change from an innocent and chaste Diana to the elderly crone, Hecate. Thus, once she returns to civilization, Moodie cannot forget her experiences in the backwoods, and, therefore, "Journal II 1840-1871" furthers her mental acceptance and understanding of the land through reflection, meditation, and dream. Moodie's concentration on the land prevents her development as a Venus figure; she is so preoccupied with understanding how the land invades her that she becomes capable only of evolving from maiden to crone.

Similar to the ending of the first journal, "Journal II" begins with a trip. In "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," death and burial create a physical bond for Moodie; she gains, imaginatively and in retrospect, the roots she lacked at the end of her life in the bush. First, she emphasizes her previous detachment by describing her son's final journey as "a voyage of discovery/ into the land I floated on/ but could not touch to claim."[81] Then her attachment to her son is stressed by her summary description of him as "cairn of my plans and future charts."[82] Finally, when her son "was hung in the river like a heart"[83] he becomes the source of life for the land. Thus, when his body is retrieved, Moodie is suddenly able to "see" and "feel" the land:

> It was spring, the sun kept shining, the new grass
> lept to solidity;
> my hands glistened with details.[84]

The retrieval of the body is a rebirth, but not the rebirth of her son; rather the return of the boy to his mother initiates the beginning of the natural cycle; for Moodie the body brings with it spring; the land is new, reborn or at least renewed. Her hands glisten with the details of her son's voyage, not with her old dreams. Now, her floating ends.

> After the long trip I was tired of waves.
> My foot hit rock. The dream sails
> collapsed, ragged.[85]

Both mother and son have been on voyages--the son into the land, the mother floating on the land with the son representing her cairn, her landmark. When the son loses his life, Moodie's cairn is no longer simply a landmark; it is a memorial and tomb which her foot hits. Thus, the plans and charts of her voyage become part of the land. With a defiant act of claiming she says, "I planted him in this country/ like a flag."[86] Her voyage ends with a burial which places her charts in the land; her future is rooted in the land.

The abrupt and unexpected intimacy with the land, precipitated by her son's death, triggers Moodie's conscious review of her life in the backwoods. Her earlier acceptance of physical characteristics similar to the land's is simply communicated through metaphors; Moodie uses these metaphors to explore the psychic consequences of her acquired affinity, and thus the second journal completes the awareness begun but only partially expressed in the first journal.

In order to integrate the metaphors of physical change and the character's mental awareness of the consequences of that change, Atwood chooses to make Moodie consciously re-experience certain of the situations she physically endured in the bush. For example, in "The Immigrants" she

now recalls the mixed feelings she had as an immigrant. Although at the beginning of this poem Moodie is an observer, she senses how the immigrants hold fast to their illusions ("They think they will make an order/ like the old one")[87] and tersely states how life in the bush erodes not only their illusions but also their former place in the old order:

> but always they are too poor, the sky
> is flat, the green fruit shrivels
> in the prairie sun, wood is for burning;
> and if they go back, the towns
>
> in time have crumbled, their tongues
> stumble among awkward teeth, their ears
> are filled with the sound of breaking glass.[88]

Such contemplation stimulates Moodie's memory and creates a bond between herself and the newly arrived immigrants. As she anticipates the course of events, her thoughts become more personal; she says "I wish I could forget them/ and so forget myself."[89] She cannot of course, and so this poem ends with a definition which metaphorically makes her mind a map traversed by featureless immigrants:

> my mind is a wide pink map
> across which move year after year
> arrows and dotted lines, further and further,
> people in railway cars
>
> their heads stuck out of the windows
> at stations, drinking milk or singing.
> their features hidden with beards or shawls
> day and night riding across an ocean of unknown
> land to an unknown land.[90]

Thus Moodie again makes herself the environment, the land travelled and explored; she allows others to invade her as she contemplates their journey into the land. In the next five poems, Mrs Moodie meditates upon events which occurred while she lived in the bush.

The events which Moodie explores in these poems fall into two general categories. Three poems ("Dream 1: The Bush Garden," "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," and "Dream 3: Night Bear Which Frightened Cattle") are concerned with nature and two poems ("1837 War in Retrospect" and "Charivari") are concerned with history. The dreams do not appear consecutively; rather, "1837 War in Retrospect" appears between dream one and dream two, and "Charivari" appears between dream two and dream three. In the dreams, Mrs Moodie confronts first the land, then a hunter who becomes the animal he hunts, and finally a bear. In the historical poems, Mrs Moodie defines first what she believes will be the ultimate significance of the War of 1837, and then why the participants in and reporters of the charivari need pay attention to the charivari. The dreams reinforce for Moodie the centrality of the natural cycles, while the historical poems illustrate the relative unimportance of chronological events.

For example, in her first dream Mrs Moodie returns to the bush garden which had "gone to seed."[91] By animating the fruit and vegetables, she is able not only to penetrate the surface but to identify the action she sees taking place. She

> could see
> the potatoes curled
> like grubs in the soil
> the radishes thrusting down
> their fleshy snouts, the beets
> pulsing like slow amphibian hearts[92]

By making this act of growing more animal, Moodie sees the gathering of the fruits in a new way. When she bends to pick the strawberries, she is dismembering a living creature:

When I bent
to pick, my hands
came away red and wet[93]

The reluctance to become actively involved with the land which characterized "Journal I" is in the dream replaced by Moodie's responsibility for bloody harvesting. This does not imply that she fully comprehends the action, for she merely reports what she dreams; she offers no explication:

In the dream I said
I should have known
anything planted here
would come up blood[94]

Moodie experiences, even though she does not understand, a mythic insight celebrated in Dionysiac rituals.[95]

Following this first dream, Mrs Moodie contemplates, from the perspective of her experience in the bush, the ultimate position war will have in history. Here, the immediate impact and importance of war is reduced to unclear memories and a child's drawing:

. . . this war will soon be among
those tiny ancestral figures
flickering dull white through the back of your skull,
confused, anxious, not sure any more
what they are doing there

. . . . . .

or crouching within a rough grey
crayon diagram of a fort,
shooting at each other, the smoke and red fire
made actual through a child's finger.[96]

The overwhelming impression is of the relative unimportance of history which Moodie defines as "that list/ of ballooning wishes, flukes,/ bent times, plunges and mistakes/ clutched like parachutes."[97] History is inconsequential because it is linear ("rolling itself up in your head/ at

one end and unrolling at the other")[98] and therefore does not affect the vitality of the natural cycles. In her first dream, Mrs Moodie was unable to comment on her actions because she did not fully comprehend them, but, here, Moodie recalls a situation she is familiar with and because she understands this area of experience she can now pass judgement on the significance of the war.

In her second dream, Moodie describes a confrontation with the still-hunter who identifies with animals. "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter" depicts her encounter with the hunter who, when he hunts, virtually becomes the animal he shoots.

> every time I aim, I feel
> my skin grow fur
> my head heavy with antlers
> and during the stretched instant
> the bullet glides on its thread of speed
> my soul runs innocent as hooves[99]

In the poem, how the metamorphosis occurs and its consequences are explicit. Brian experiences identification whenever he shoots an animal. But the hunter, Moodie observes, undergoes involuntary metamorphosis; he has no control over the change which happens "every time" he aims. His justification, "I kill because I have to",[100] does not seem to satisfy him and when he looks up after asking "Is God just to his creatures?"[101] and after stating "I die more often than many,"[102] Moodie sees "the white scar made by the hunting knife/ around his neck."[103] Here, because Mrs Moodie is not an active participant in the metamorphosis, she does not confront the animals and their response to both the land and the hunter, but she does observe the difficulties experienced when a man suffers identification with the animal he kills. As in dream one, Mrs Moodie fails to comprehend the point of the dream and thus she does not comment

upon the scene she describes; rather, she simply states

> When I woke
> I remembered: he has been gone
> twenty years and not heard from.[104]

Through her meeting with Brian, she learns of the quandary faced by the hunter: he must kill to survive, but he also feels he is a murderer, an intruder who disrupts the natural cycle of the animals.

In "Charivari," the poem which appears between dream two and dream three, an American lady tells how a black man was murdered during a charivari. This lady who is ignorant of the intimacy of violence illustrated by Brian distances herself from the action by merely reporting the incident and by adding, with the old rhetoric that Mrs Moodie might have used fresh from England, that she "thought it was a disgraceful piece/ of business."[105] Mrs Moodie, after quoting what the American lady said and after reporting the lady's response, criticizes such a stance. This criticism, contained within brackets and given in the form of a note, cautions the reader about the dangers of calmly accepting the American lady's position.

> (Note: Never pretend this isn't
> part of the soil too, teadrinkers, and inadvertent
> victims and murderers, when we come this way
>
> again in other forms, take care
> to look behind, within
> where the skeleton face beneath
>
> the face puts on its feather mask, the arm
> within the arm lifts up the spear:[106]

Moodie now applies what she has learned from the still-hunter; she suggests that both positions (the American lady's and those who took part in the charivari) are two sides of the same coin, that as well as man's

civilized side there is also man's primitivism. Although her advice is to recognize both aspects and to "Resist those cracked/ drumbeats"[107] and "Become human,"[108] she implies, through the use of "when," that similar destruction is not only possible but inevitable.

In "Dream 3: Night Bear Which Frightened Cattle," Moodie displaces herself from the images of convention, from the lanterns which she had earlier required to see anything, from those who "laughed, safe with lanterns/ at the kitchen door,"[109] and places herself in the area "beneath stories,"[110] imagining the actions of the bear who frightened the cattle:

> I lean with my feet grown intangible
> because I am not there
>
> watching the bear I didn't see condense
> itself among the trees, an outline
> tenuous as an echo
>
> but it is real, heavier
> than real. . . .
>
> it absorbs all terror
>
> it moves toward the lighted cabin
> below us on the slope
> where my family gathers
>
> a mute vibration passing
> between my ears[111]

Unlike the still-hunter's unpleasant and involuntary identification with the animals, Mrs Moodie willingly projects herself; she imagines the movements of the bear rather than simply fearing the actions of the unseen creature.

The dreams help Moodie to overcome her previous fears; the confrontations awaiting her but which she could not face while in the bush take place in the dreams. This means that her memories of the past

are not simply memories of her alienation and isolation. Mrs Moodie, however, does not immediately offer an explicit statement of her acceptance or rejection of these confrontations; she reports the dreams but offers no interpretation. On the other hand, "1837 War in Retrospect" and "Charivari" are characterized by Moodie's criticism of actual situations, and her judgements indicate a retreat from the importance of history, patriotism, and conventional morality.

Precisely how much effect the dreams have had is not revealed until the next poem "The Deaths of the Other Children" where Moodie defines the power of the wilderness. Here, she explains how "The body dies/ little by little/ the body buries itself/ joins itself/ to the loosened mind, to the black-/ berries and thistles."[112] The body's final resting place is, of course, the grave which Moodie describes as "the shallow/ foundations of our former houses,/ dim hollows now in the sandy soil."[113] After she questions whether she has spent all these years "building up this edifice/ my composite/ self, this crumbling hovel,"[114] Moodie defines how her "disintegrated children"[115] have become part of the land which reaches out for her too:

> Everywhere I walk, along
> the overgrowing paths, my skirt
> tugged at by the spreading briers
>
> they catch at my heels with their fingers[116]

Here, Mrs Moodie acknowledges that in the end the land will win because, when the body dies, it is buried, it disintegrates, it becomes part of the land.

Throughout the second journal Mrs Moodie confronts the land and herself. Once she more fully understands what has taken place in the

bush, she can interpret the nature of her dual response to nature and Canada. Thus, the final poem of "Journal II" defines, as its title suggests, "The Double Voice":

> Two voices
> took turns using my eyes:
>
> One had manners,
> painted in watercolours,
> used hushed tones when speaking
> of mountains or Niagara Falls,
> composed uplifting verse
> and expended sentiment upon the poor.
>
> The other voice
> had other knowledge:
> that men sweat
> always and drink often,
> that pigs are pigs
> but must be eaten
> anyway, that unborn babies
> fester like wounds in the body,
> that there is nothing to be done
> about mosquitoes[117]

Clearly, the voice that "saw through my/ bleared and gradually/ bleaching eyes, red leaves,/ the rituals of seasons and rivers"[118] is the voice brought from England, a voice which ignores the hardships of the wilderness and sees only the beautiful, idealistic side of nature. The other voice which "found a dead dog/ jubilant with maggots/ half-buried among the sweet peas"[119] is the voice drawn from her by the wilderness; the observation of the grandiose is replaced by observation of the minute, of the specific processes which make up the life cycle of nature.

Atwood's definition of the double voice completes what the animals of "Journal I" could not. The process was perhaps simpler than Moodie expected; what was required was greater attentiveness to what happened around her. She discovers that the civilized voice, cluttered by illusion and expectation, prohibits the confrontation necessary for

the other voice to find its expression.

As Moodie moves closer to death, she acquires a stronger attachment to the land she will eventually be buried in. "Journal III 1871-1969" takes her through old age, to death, through burial, to her final resurrection as the spirit of the land. The transition from maiden to crone is complete; Moodie-Hecate becomes goddess of the underworld. Her eventual resurrection, her return to above ground, associates her with Persephone. This association emphasizes Moodie's duality; her acceptance of the land which she feels she must now defend causes her return to the city to warn those who live in this concrete jungle that they too must eventually be returned to the land.

The civilized voice which had prevented her initial acceptance of the land now seems to be trying to erase her past and this she resents; thus as death approaches she frequently expresses her desire to be part of the land in order to preserve her past. However, the poem which opens this third journal is perhaps Atwood's weakest. Here, the transition from the last journal and the connection to the previous poems are poor. "Later in Belleville: Career" is a paradox which attempts to suggest how while in the bush Moodie was able to use art to alleviate some of the hardships but while in the town art has no use. The career suggested in the title does not exist. The beginning of the poem specifies Moodie's activity while in the bush:

> Once by a bitter candle
> of oil and braided
> rags, I wrote
> verses about love and sleighbells
>
> which I exchanged for potatoes;

in the summers I painted butterflies
on a species of white fungus
which were bought by the tourists, glass-
cased for English parlours

and my children (miraculous)
wore shoes.[120]

Then, this artistic and purposeful activity is contrasted with Moodie's present passivity:

Now every day
I sit on a stuffed sofa
in my own fringed parlour, have
uncracked plates (from which I eat
at intervals)
and a china teaset.[121]

To this point, the poem's progression is fairly clear: while Moodie lived in the bush her artistries served a purpose, but now that there are no hardships there seems to be no need to write or to paint. The concluding stanza ("There is no use for art.")[122] fails to make Atwood's point clear. Because of the period which ends the stanza about her present inactivity and because the concluding sentence is a complete stanza, it is not obvious whether the final stanza merely comments upon the present or whether this stanza is meant to qualify the whole poem. Too many questions are left unanswered and thus the reader is left uncertain as to which situation Mrs Moodie prefers. Not until the next poem does the reader learn the direction Moodie chooses.

Moodie's attention turns away from acquired comforts to herself and more and more she defines herself in terms of natural images. For example, in "Daguerrotype Taken in Old Age" Moodie, for the second time in the journals, looks at her own image; but this time, she looks at a photograph and not into a mirror. And for a second time, she is shocked at the image:

I know I change
have changed

but whose is this vapid face
pitted and vast, rotund
suspended in empty paper
as though in a telescope

the granular moon[123]

When Moodie turns from the photograph and goes into the garden, she continues to describe herself in terms of the moon image.

I revolve among the vegetables,
my head ponderous
reflecting the sun

in shadows from the pocked ravines
cut in my cheeks, my eye-
sockets 2 craters[124]

Her paths, however, tie her to the earth and, finally, in her attempt to cope with approaching death, she defines herself as "being/ eaten away by light."[125]

This idea of herself as an integral part of nature is extended into the poem "Wish: Metamorphosis to Heraldic Emblem" where Moodie suggests she will not simply cease to exist when she is buried. Rather, as the title suggests, she will become the figure on a coat of arms of the country below the ground. She describes what she will do and how she will look:

I will prowl and slink
in crystal darkness
among the stalactite roots, with new
formed plumage
uncorroded
gold and

Fiery green, fingers
curving and scaled, my
opal
no
eyes glowing[126]

Moodie's wish is both her first direct statement of a desire to become the figure who represents life underground, and her first claim of kinship; the beast is in fact a totem, a declaration of kinship expressed by the emblem of a clan or an individual. Moreover, the use of heraldic emblems is a familiar means of identifying those entitled to armorial bearings and, thus, Moodie claims her ties to the underground (she will not become the beast until she dies) in terms which her conventional mode of expression both accepts and understands.

This feeling of kinship increases as Moodie ages. Indeed, acceptance of nature and of the country of her final resting place characterizes the remaining poems. In "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," Moodie and three friends visit a lunatic asylum which consists of three floors. Two of the floors are inhabited by inmates whose actions illustrate two possible responses to the progress represented by Toronto. The first floor, where "there were/ women sitting, sewing"[127] who "looked at us sadly, gently,/ answered questions,"[128] is for those who passively accept where they are and what has happened. On the second floor, the women are more savage; they were "crouching, thrashing,/ tearing off their clothes, screaming,"[129] as if in active defiance of and in protest against their state and place of existence. Neither of these floors seems to have much to do with nature, but the third floor, the place Mrs Moodie is loath to leave, has a natural setting: "It was a hill, with boulders, trees, no houses."[130] Observance of the inmates on the first two floors must be endured before Moodie can find the peace offered by the third floor. Her companions are disinterested in this final floor and urge Mrs Moodie "to go out/ to where there were streets and/ the Toronto harbour";[131] she declines:

> I shook my head. There were no clouds, the flowers
> deep red and feathered, shot from among
> the dry stones,
> the air
> was about to tell me
> all kinds of answers[132]

Thus, Moodie rejects her friends and the civilized sites of the city in order to learn what the air was about to tell. She has in effect ascended from the first floor to the third floor as if she had to endure, if not understand, the responses of the quiet women on the first floor and the savage women on the second floor before she could find any peace. This third floor room is "a different kind of room"[133] in which unblemished nature is raised above the progress of civilization as represented by Toronto. Because this is the highest room, Moodie's acceptance of what is there is the greatest form of insanity to those who praise Toronto, to those who have constructed the asylum. Her rejection of the city suggests she voluntarily commits herself to the asylum which houses those who wish to embrace nature and reject progress. Moodie's rejection of the city is her last defiant action before dying, for in the next poem, she is on her deathbed.

In "Solipsism While Dying" Moodie contemplates herself as if she were the centre of life, as if she were the only knowable, or only existent, thing. As she reviews her life, she considers what various parts of her anatomy have contributed. She begins with the skeleton, and the production of flesh she describes in terms of her response to the land.

> enemy
> opposing, then taken
> for granted, earth harvested, used
> up, walked over[134]

Next, the sounds produced by her ears declare her reluctance to hear what sounds were actually being made.

> what I heard I
> created. (voices
> determining, repeating
> histories, worn customs[135]

Then, she takes responsibility for her creations:

> the mouth produces words I said I created
> myself, and these
> frames, commas, calendars
> that enclose me[136]

Although words create that which encloses her, hands make tangible all within the enclosure:

> the world touched
> into existence: was
> this cup, this village here
> before my fingers[137]

Moodie effectively suggests that through her skeleton, her ears, her mouth, and her hands, she has created the earth, perpetuated histories and customs, created herself, and touched into existence all that is within her world. Finally, when she considers her eyes, she declares an end.

> the eyes produce light the sky
> leaps at me: let there be
> the sun-
> set[138]

Clearly, everything finds its source in her; her overwhelming impression is that she began it all and her major concern as she is about to die is

> What will they do now
> that I that all
> depending on me disappears?[139]

After Moodie's death, she explains, from two perspectives in

two different poems, her responses to Canada. In "Thoughts from Underground," Moodie explains how she began to acquire her double feelings. She begins with her arrival:

> When I first reached this country
> I hated it
> and I hated it more each year[140]

Moodie then describes the hardships she and her family endured both summer and winter. She explains, however, that what should have caused her joy does not:

> Then we were made successful
> and I felt I ought to love
> this country.
> I said I loved it
> and my mind saw double.[141]

The Moodies' success is associated with their life in Belleville. Mrs Moodie attempts to love the land by praising the signs of civilization apparent in the cities. She tries to convince herself that she should love it because

> due to natural resources, native industry, superior penitentiaries
> we will all be rich and powerful[142]

Her attempts to convince herself fail, and she concludes her thoughts by saying, "(though it [Belleville] is still no place for an english gentleman)."[143]

Moodie has another voice, however, and this voice, which reveals her ties to the land, surfaces in "Alternate Thoughts from Underground." Here, Moodie hears the footsteps of those above the ground, "the inheritors, the raisers/ of glib superstructures."[144] What this part of Moodie prays for is the destruction of steel and glass: "O topple this

glass pride, fireless/ rivetted babylon."[145]

Moodie's prayer is not directly answered; rather, Moodie becomes one of the "stone/ voices of the land,"[146] and, though she is "unrisen yet,"[147] she does define her apocalyptic vision in terms which clearly define her association with Nature:

> god is not
> the voice in the whirlwind
>
> god is the whirlwind
>
> at the last
> judgement we will all be trees[148]

In the final poem of the collection, Moodie makes her appearance. As the previous poem suggests, she now identifies herself with the land, and she believes that the city cannot totally overcome Nature. She, therefore, says,

> It would take more than that to banish
> me: this is my kingdom still.[149]

She acknowledges that the people in the city are as confused as she was before she became one with the land:

> Right now, the snow
> is no more familiar
> to you than it was to me:
> this is my doing.
> The grey air, the roar
> going on behind it
> are no more familiar.[150]

Moodie's description of herself brings to the foreground her association with Hecate, and her determination to destroy buildings suggests that, like Persephone, Moodie brings with her the renewal of the land:

I am the old woman
sitting across from you on the bus,
her shoulders drawn up like a shawl;
out of her eyes come secret
hatpins, destroying
the walls, the ceiling.[151]

At the end of "A Bus Along St Clair: December," Moodie states why she has returned:

Turn, look down:
there is no city;
this is the centre of a forest

your place is empty[152]

Her warning to those who live in the city implies that what was her personal struggle is, in fact, their struggle also. These people must acknowledge that they will eventually not only confront the land but also become part of it.

In The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Atwood combines her skills as a critic and as an artist to create a myth which she believes defines the nature of the Canadian psyche. Atwood's extensive use of documents, combined with what she finds to be important characteristics of Moodie's counterparts in Classical mythology, work to transform an historical personage into a character meant to represent the state of the psyche of all Canadians. While her general statement about Canadians' "paranoid schizophrenia" is, I believe, questionable, Atwood, through transforming Moodie, does successfully turn what she originally identified as Moodie's personal struggle into a national concern.

CHAPTER V

MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S THE COLLECTED WORKS OF BILLY THE KID

In 1970, the same year that Margaret Atwood published The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Michael Ondaatje published The Collected Works of Billy the Kid. Unlike Atwood who found her subject within Canadian boundaries, Ondaatje chose his subject from south of the border. Atwood's book results from her desire to expose Canadians to Canadian myths:

> . . . Ondaatje's book is a natural outgrowth from his love of Hollywood (and Italian) Westerns: among his favourite films are Sergio Leone's mythic Once Upon a Time in the West, and Arthur Penn's contribution to the legend of Billy the Kid, The Left Handed Gun. (Ondaatje's book is subtitled 'Left Handed Poems'.)[1]

Atwood creates and promotes a mythology which has its roots in Canadian history; Ondaatje embraces an American outlaw-hero. But the major difference between these poets is one of source and not one of intention.

Each attempts to move his subject beyond the limitations imposed by history; their interest lies not so much in historic fact as in the psychic motivations of the subject. History does, however, provide both poets with facts to which they react. Atwood learns about Canadian pioneering from the first hand accounts of Susanna Moodie. Ondaatje learns about Billy the Kid by reading and by watching biographies based partly on fact and partly on fiction. For Atwood, Susanna Moodie's books remain her only sources of historic facts; several kinds of biographies are Ondaatje's sources. Through reacting to these documents,

the poets discover a way to transform their characters from historical personages to major characters in their newly created myths. Atwood discovers a tension between Victorian conventions and Moodie's personal feelings. Her exploration of this tension generates three sequential journals which interpret Susanna Moodie's experiences as a nineteenth century Canadian pioneer; by the time Moodie surfaces in the twentieth century, she represents what Atwood believes to be the general condition of the Canadian psyche. Ondaatje finds that authors' attempts first to establish and then to sustain Billy the Kid as a legendary hero result in Billy's personal responses and beliefs being overwhelmed by their manipulations and selections of events and language which serve only to justify their belief in Billy's heroism; in these accounts the Kid's personal voice seems missing altogether. Ondaatje's exploration of Billy's image as it is developed within the documents generates a version of the legend in which the way Billy perceives reinforces his established status as an outlaw and an outsider. By the time Ondaatje offers his work to the public, Billy the Kid is not only an outsider, but also an artist who, through speaking for himself, reveals his inner thoughts and emotions. Atwood finds a submerged voice in the recorded voice of Mrs Moodie; Ondaatje offers what seems to him a more authentic voice to replace the one attributed to Billy in the records of others.

In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Ondaatje suggests the problems which he has as an artist by transforming Billy the Kid from legendary hero to representative artist; that is, by making Billy his surrogate, Ondaatje is able to make generalizations about his profession. Ondaatje is not a chronicler, but an artist who discovers in Billy's legend characteristics which Ondaatje himself equates with the

characteristics which define the artist. In order to transform Billy and to express his discovery, Ondaatje provides the Kid with a voice which captures both the essence of the legend and Billy's artistic abilities. He develops two narrative strands which, through their interaction, simultaneously sustain Billy's legendary status of outlaw-hero and provide a new dimension to the legend by making Billy an artist. The narrative strand which sustains the Kid's legendary status is concerned primarily with Billy's public image; the other strand with his private self. Through his selection and re-ordering of material from the documents, Ondaatje perpetuates Billy's public image; through examples of Billy's interaction with friends, and through the poems, the sketches, and the song with which Billy is credited, Ondaatje creates the Kid's private image. Documented evidence gives access to Billy's public personality; invented evidence to his personal life. In order that the public image and the private image may be identified as parts of a single, integrated personality, Ondaatje interrupts the chronology of the material from the documents with the Kid's expression of his social and domestic experiences. These interruptions also help to illustrate how the way in which Billy himself perceives life is compatible with history's association of Billy's image with violence and alienation. The fragmentation caused by these interruptions is accentuated by Ondaatje's adoption of a fragmented time scheme which allows him to concentrate on Billy's perception and on the violence and alienation associated with that perception. Thus, both Ondaatje's critical insights and his creative inventions shape his book.

As critic and artist, Ondaatje is interested both in what historical reports, whether true or exaggerated, have ignored and what they have defined. As critic, he notes that, in the process of creating

the legend, authors must convince readers of Billy's heroism and that, therefore, they tend to depersonalize the Kid's life by not letting Billy speak for himself. As artist, Ondaatje makes use of his discovery by providing Billy with his own voice and by perpetuating the legend but also adding a dimension. In his book, Ondaatje hints at the nature of his interests when Billy defines what The Collected Works offers. Billy says,

> Not a story about me through their eyes then. Find the beginning, the slight silver key to unlock it, to dig it out. Here then is a maze to begin, be in.[2]

The material which precedes Billy's statement makes it obvious to the reader that The Collected Works is not simply another biography or another story from people who knew Billy. The Kid implies that the reader will not be entertained without having to do some work for himself. Billy goes on to define the type of maze the reader will encounter.

> Two years ago Charlie Bowdre and I criss-crossed the Canadian border. Ten miles north of it ten miles south. Our horses stepped from country to country, across low rivers, through different colours of tree green. The two of us, our criss-cross like a whip in slow motion, the ridge of action rising and falling, getting narrower in radius till it ended and we drifted down to Mexico and old heat. That there is nothing of depth, of significant accuracy, of wealth in the image, I know. It is there for a beginning.[3]

Billy's illustration of what the book offers is problematical unless the reader realizes that this example defines what the book does by using the same method as the book. That is, Billy, as he frequently does throughout the book, describes an episode in his life in his own words. His language, particularly his suggestion that the wandering back and forth across the border is whip-like, betrays the violence which characterizes his life; his suggestion that the "ridge of action" rises and falls

reflects the alternation between violent outbursts of energy and periods of calm which characterize the book, and the narrowing of the "radius till it ended" suggests how the rising and falling action ends only when Billy is killed. Billy drifts "down to Mexico" at the end of the episode; in Ondaatje's book, there is, after Billy's death, a comic book episode set in Mexico. That the example, like the book, is a maze is indicated by the way Billy presents this episode. The reader finds no obvious way to enter, to "be in," because the Kid offers no place of entry; he merely criss-crosses without stating where he begins or where he ends. The book also works this way. Ondaatje's fragmentation of the time scheme, combined with the interruption of Billy's public image by poems and sketches which reveal his private self, prohibits the linear development normally found in the chronological methods of the biographers. The Collected Works disrupts linear development; it moves or progresses in ways similar to the whip-like criss-cross over the border; Billy's public image on, say, the American side, his private self on the Canadian side results in a figure of Billy who is somehow more complete than the images presented in previous biographies. Because Billy offers this maze early in the book, his apparent dismissal of the entire image ("there is nothing of depth, of significant accuracy, of wealth in the image") strikes the reader as true, but once the book has been read and reread, the passage becomes more important; it, in fact, becomes "the slight silver key" Billy mentions in his introduction to the example. Billy's illustration, then, offers a metaphor for Ondaatje's method in The Collected Works.

Like Atwood's The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid is dominated by a single controlling voice. But, unlike Atwood's development of a single narrative strand

which naturally evolves from her giving expression to Moodie's submerged voice, and which gradually reveals Moodie's divided consciousness, Ondaatje offers two narrative strands which define Billy's public image and private self not through the gradual revelation of each image, but through Billy's tenuous control of energy. This tenuous control Ondaatje believes is implied through the impression of Billy which the public accepts, but it is also caused by the way in which Billy perceives. Therefore, one narrative strand works to reinforce the public's established impression, while the other strand complements this impression by illustrating how Billy, as an individual, sees and interprets life.

The narrative strand which sustains Billy's public image is characterized by borrowings from documents. Through his selection and reworking of documented material, Ondaatje retains those elements of Billy's image which are developed and nurtured by legend. Ondaatje realizes that his "documents" at least partially break their historical confines, and he is most interested in those aspects of these documents where this severing occurs. For example, his major source, Walter Noble Burns' The Saga of Billy the Kid (1926), glorifies the life of Billy by combining an element of fact with stories which are not verifiable; that is, while Billy is an historical personage who was intimately involved in the history of the American southwest, Burns' narrative is characterized by descriptions of Billy and versions of stories about Billy which exaggerate the Kid's role in history, and about which an historian would remain skeptical. As Burns' title suggests, he presents a story of what he believes are Billy the Kid's heroic deeds. Because these deeds are associated with a particular period of American history and because the events contain an element of fact, Burns' book presents what is properly

called the legend of Billy the Kid. Thus, for Ondaatje the documents provide him with an image of the Kid which is more than historical, but less than mythical. As part of a legend, Billy retains his connection with history, but his image is shaped and defined by the authors who write about him according to the conventions of fiction. What Ondaatje understands is that to create a myth in which Billy is the central character, he must somehow break the Kid's ties to a particular aspect of American history without destroying Billy's legendary status of outlaw-hero and outsider. Ondaatje wishes to add to, not take away from Billy's image; he wishes to nourish the legend.

Because Ondaatje is concerned with Billy's created image, his borrowings are not restricted to the simple reproduction of some of the more notorious events commonly attributed to the Kid, although Ondaatje does have Billy tell about the manhunts, and the consequent deaths of Tom O'Folliard, Charlie Bowdre, and himself. Rather, to complement Billy's status of outlaw-hero as it is revealed in such stories, Ondaatje adopts certain conventional approaches and techniques, virtually ignores the Kid's involvement in the Lincoln County war, includes character references for both Billy and Pat Garrett from people who knew both men, and repeats the judge's verdict when Billy is convicted of murder. Because these episodes appear neither in a single, self-contained block nor in a chronological sequence, Ondaatje's modifications and placements of this material need closer examination if the full force of Billy's public image in The Collected Works is to be realized.

Ondaatje is aware that the simplest way to sustain Billy's status is to adopt certain conventional approaches and techniques. Thus, the manhunt, the deaths of Tom O'Folliard, Charlie Bowdre, and the Kid

are told, but not from the traditional omniscient point of view. Billy speaks in the first person. In presenting these stories, Ondaatje both follows the lead of earlier writers by creating his own "facts" and adopts certain fictions perpetuated by Walter Noble Burns in The Saga of Billy the Kid. For example, Ondaatje lists only twenty people killed by the Kid, rather than the traditional twenty-one. In the opening story which describes Tom O'Folliard's murder, Ondaatje's description of Azariah F. Wild's participation in the murder is entirely invented. Finally, near the end of the book, Ondaatje invents his own version of Billy's death. He has Garrett crawl into bed with Pete Maxwell before he shoots Billy in the head. In Burns' book, Garrett moves from a chair to the floor as he shoots Billy in the heart. In some other sentimentalized versions, someone else actually dies in Billy's place and Billy escapes to Mexico with his sweetheart. Like Burns and others, Ondaatje adopts the image of Billy as victim, which means that Pat Garrett is a villain who kills O'Folliard on Christmas.[4] Ondaatje adopts these conventions and techniques which give him license to change or retain "facts" about Billy's life for the same reasons Burns and other biographers chose these methods: to select, to rework, and, if necessary to change "facts" in order to present material in the most convincing manner.

Ondaatje, therefore, makes major changes in his presentation of the traditional stories. First, Billy recalls the events and describes them himself. Second, because Ondaatje includes only episodes from late in the Kid's life, his stories appear much earlier in his work than they do in Burns' book. For example, Ondaatje's first traditional story is about Tom O'Folliard's death; this murder by Pat Garrett does not occur until more than half way through The Saga. Third, Ondaatje's selections

delete most every story in which Billy kills someone. Burns, on the other hand, constructs elaborate justifications for Billy's murders. By leaving out the murders the Kid commits, but including the manhunts for Billy, Ondaatje succeeds in making Billy appear a victim of Garrett's cold-blooded revenge. And fourth, Ondaatje divides stories; by separating the beginning of the story from its conclusion, Ondaatje is able to create more economically the same kind of suspense that Burns creates with a succession of stories which keep the reader wondering what will happen next. For example, Ondaatje begins the episode at Stinking Springs on page twenty-two. Bowdre is shot, but Billy, Wilson, and Rudabaugh are still in the cabin which is surrounded by Garrett and his posse when Ondaatje ends the account. The conclusion to this story is not given until page forty-eight. Thus, the reader must wait twenty-six pages to find out what happens to the Kid. For the details which make up these stories, Ondaatje relies on Burns, although he does occasionally add details of his own.

Perhaps more interesting than Ondaatje's reproduction of these episodes are his borrowings from Burns which sustain Billy's public image in ways which the stories by themselves cannot. These borrowings are cast by the poet into three forms which, in their variation from the originals, suggest something of the license Ondaatje exercises in order to create a particular image of the Kid. The source of these comments Ondaatje identifies as Burns' The Saga.[5]

Ondaatje's inclusion of Burns' report of Tunstall's death is important to Billy's image as a victim. But, because Ondaatje wishes to break Billy's ties to a particular period of history, he is careful not to include any mention of the connection of Tunstall's murder with the

Lincoln County war. Thus, while Ondaatje agrees with Burns' conclusion that, in this instance at least, Billy is a victim of the violence of others, he does not wish this episode to be used to justify Billy's involvement with the war, and, therefore, only includes the description of Tunstall's death. He also places this comment rather late in his book. Ondaatje's stance and his placing of this episode late in the work both diametrically opposes Burns' reasons for including the event and disrupts Burns' chronology. For Burns, the Lincoln County War and Billy's involvement in it are essential to his justification of Billy's status as victim. Because Billy was young when the war was waged, and because Tunstall's murder provoked many of the murders Billy committed later, Burns places Tunstall's murder near the beginning of The Saga. Moreover, since Billy's part in the murder was that of innocent bystander, the Kid cannot be held responsible for creating the violence. Burns, therefore, does his best to create hostility toward the murderers and to create sympathy for Billy. Ondaatje, on the other hand, offers numerous examples of Billy's violence prior to the suggestion of a justification for such violence. Moreover, Ondaatje further complicates the way this episode suggests how Billy's violence is justified by the manner in which he introduces this passage. The introduction says, "A motive? some reasoning we can give to explain all this violence. Was there a source for all this? yup--"[6] As occasionally occurs in the book, the "we" makes identification of the speaker difficult. Because Ondaatje presents this book as if it contains only Billy's work, the first assumption would be that Billy introduces the passage, but this assumption fails to justify the use of "we". Indeed, the "we" sounds like a more distanced view than Billy's, and, therefore, the second assumption would make Ondaatje the

speaker. If this is the case, then Ondaatje, through using the plural pronoun, implicates the reader in the justification; the use of the "we" suggests the reader's, that is the public's, acceptance of Burns' justification. Because Ondaatje edits Burns' report, adopts Burns' colourful and dramatic prose, and reprints the passage in italics, he implies Billy's victimization while not making Billy explain himself, and he leaves open to debate precisely the question of who takes responsibility for this explanation. While Ondaatje wishes to emphasize Billy's innocence, the placing of the passage more than half way through his book, combined with the rather dismissive "yup" which ends the introduction also suggests that Ondaatje is skeptical that the events associated with this period in the Kid's life and Burns' psychological explication fully justify Billy's violence.

In other instances, Ondaatje's borrowings rely not so much on examples which gain their power through Burns' persuasive language as through the authority a character automatically has because he, or, in these cases, she, knew the Kid or Pat Garrett personally. Ondaatje, therefore, borrows portions of what Burns presents as character references in order to either inflate Billy's image or deflate Pat Garrett's image. In these cases, Ondaatje reworks a Burns passage so that a particular character speaks directly to the reader. Early in The Collected Works, the passage associated with Garrett provides a kind of comic relief. For example, in virtually the same words as in Burns' account, Ondaatje has Paulita Maxwell say of Pat Garrett:

> I remember the first day Pat Garrett ever set foot in Fort Sumner. I was a small girl with dresses at my shoe-tops and when he came to our house and asked for a job, I stood behind my brother Pete and stared at him in open eyed wonder; he had

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> I remember the first day Pat Garrett ever set foot in Fort Sumner. I was a small girl with dresses at my shoe-tops and when he came to our house and asked for a job, I stood behind my brother Pete and stared at him in open eyed wonder; he had

> the longest legs I'd ever seen and he looked so comical and had such a droll way of talking that after he was gone, Pete and I had a good laugh about him.[7]

By suggesting Garrett's comical features, Ondaatje is able to contrast the initial impression his appearance caused with the initial impression Billy makes. Because he wishes to give more weight to the impression offered by Paulita Maxwell, Ondaatje does not print the passage in italics; he does, however, disrupt Burns' chronology. Garrett's role in Billy's life begins, from a chronological point of view, rather late, and thus, Burns' description appears almost midway through his work. Because Ondaatje wishes to establish Garrett's influence on Billy, he introduces Garrett early in The Collected Works.

In contrast to Paulita Maxwell's description of Garrett who arrives alone and whose presence fails to cause much excitement, is Sallie Chisum's recollection of her first meeting with Billy the Kid. To emphasize the contrast, Ondaatje not only prints the excerpt in italics, but also changes the prose to poetry and divides the Burns' passage into two parts. When Burns reports how Sallie Chisum described her first meeting with Billy the Kid, he has Sallie say,

> "The house was full of people all the time; the ranch was a little world in itself; I couldn't have been lonesome if I had tried.
>
> "Every man worth knowing in the Southwest, and many not worth knowing, were guests, one time or another. . . . What they were made no difference in their welcome. Sometimes a man would ride up in a hurry, eat a meal in a hurry, and depart in a hurry . . . .
>
> "Billy the Kid used to come often and sometimes stayed for a week or two. With his reputation as a bad man and killer, I remember how frightened I was the first time he came. I was sitting in the living room when word was brought that this famous desperado had arrived. I fell into a panic. I pictured him in all the evil ugliness of a bloodthirsty ogre. I half-expected he would slit my throat if he didn't like my looks.

> "My heart was in my mouth as I heard his step on the porch and knew that Uncle John was bringing him in. In a daze I heard Uncle John saying with a wave of his hand, 'Sallie, this is my friend, Billy the Kid.' A good-looking, clear-eyed boy stood there with his hat in his hand, smiling at me. I stretched out my hand automatically to him, and he grasped it in a hand as small as my own."[8]

In Ondaatje's work, Sallie Chisum first describes the hospitality provided by John in a way which makes Billy no different from any other guest at the ranch:

> *The house was full of people all the time*
> *the ranch was a little world in itself*
> *I couldn't have been lonesome if I had tried*
>
> *Every man worth knowing in the Southwest,*
> *and many not worth knowing, were guests*
> *one time or another.*
> *What they were made no difference in their welcome.*
> *Sometimes a man would ride up in a hurry*
> *eat a meal in a hurry and depart in a hurry*
>
> *Billy the Kid would come in often*
> *and sometimes stayed for a week or two.*
> *I remember how frightened I was the first time he came.*[9]

Sallie Chisum's final response to Billy's first appearance is not given until twenty-two pages later:

> *I was sitting in the living room*
> *when word was brought he had arrived.*
> *I felt in a panic. I pictured him*
> *in all the evil ugliness*
> *of a bloodthirsty ogre.*
> *I half expected he would slit my throat*
> *if he didn't like my looks.*
>
> *I heard [redacted] saying with a wave of his hand,*
> *Sall[redacted] is my friend, Billy the Kid.*
> *A good[redacted]ng, clear-eyed boy stood there*
> *with his [redacted]at in his hand, smiling at me.*
>
> *I stretched out my hand automatically to him,*
> *and he grasped it in a hand as small as my own*[10]

Clearly Ondaatje changes few of Burns' words. In fact, not one of Ondaatje's words does not appear in the Burns version. Yet the effects

are totally different. Burns makes Sallie Chisum the centre of his passage. Her emotion, expressed through Burns' choice of sensational, biased language, stresses a larger than life image of Billy. The telescoping of events, with Billy the Kid the only person actually named, perpetuates the already tainted image while simultaneously focusing, not on Billy, but on Sallie's responses--her preconceived ideas as well as her surprise at the person she meets. On the other hand, while Ondaatje's alterations of Burns' text appear to be minor, the effect of the alterations is not.

To begin with, Ondaatje separates the events in the original passage. This causes emphasis to be given both to the circumstances which surround the men who come to the house and to Billy himself which in effect increases the mystery and fear surrounding the Kid. Next, Ondaatje deletes the more melodramatic words, and then alters the pace of the passage by breaking the prose sentences into poetic lines. The lines automatically slow the pace. Thus, while Burns keeps the pace as fast as possible in order to make Billy's entrance into Sallie's life as dramatic as possible, Ondaatje slows the pace and leaves out words in order to lend authority to the final impression Sallie offers. With the language slightly less dramatic and the pace slowed, the tone is altered. There is no longer the sense of an hysterical young girl meeting a desperado; rather, Sallie sounds more mature, calmer; her information is a more objective recalling of facts. Sallie remembers the mixed emotion, yet the lines of poetry control the memory and thus control the emotion. Ondaatje also suppresses the word "Uncle" which means that many of Ondaatje's readers get the impression that John and Sallie are man and wife. This obviously intentional deletion simplifies Sallie's role in

the book. Because Sallie seems to represent for Billy the ideal woman, the assumption that Sallie and John are married makes Billy's adoration of, respect for, and need for Sallie's approval, even while Billy remains distanced from Sallie, easier to understand. That is, if Sallie were not married, then Billy's not being sexually involved with her would be difficult to accept. But if Sallie is involved with someone else, then she poses no threat to Billy, and Billy, therefore, can project whatever qualities he wishes onto Sallie; she can represent, like the home in which she and John live, a still point in Billy's life.

While the description of Tunstall's murder and the reminiscences by Paulita Maxwell and Sallie Chisum are acknowledged as borrowed from Burns, Ondaatje also borrows from The Saga without acknowledging he has done so. Following Billy's description of his capture and journey to the city where he was to go on trial, Ondaatje reproduces Burns' version of the judge's verdict. Judge Warren H. Bristol states,

> It is the order of the court that you
> be taken to Lincoln and confined to
> jail until May 13th and that on that
> day between the hours of sunrise and
> noon you be hanged on the gallows
> until you are dead dead dead
> And may God have mercy on your
> soul[11]

The reproduction of this verdict in the judge's words heightens the force of the verdict, and stresses the seriousness of the sentence in a way which Billy's reporting of the sentence could not. By using the judge's words, Ondaatje is able to imply how the Kid's subsequent violent actions (Billy escapes from jail, killing two men in the process) are forced upon him by people and events over which he has no control.

Through his reworking and careful selection of material from

Burns, Ondaatje is able to sustain the Billy the Kid image with which the public is familiar while he succeeds, through deleting specific references to the Lincoln County war, in reducing Billy's connection to a particular period of American history.

The second narrative strand complements this public image of Billy by providing access to the Kid's private self. Ondaatje illustrates how Billy sees and interprets life, and in this way Ondaatje is able to reveal Billy's artistic abilities while simultaneously illustrating how the violence associated with the Kid's public image also characterizes his private self. Ondaatje's creation of this portion of the narrative is made possible by the status which legend now bestows upon Billy.

When Ondaatje sees Billy in movies and reads about him in books like The Saga of Billy the Kid, Billy is an accepted outlaw-hero. But it has not always been so. Kent Ladd Steckmesser explains:

> There are two Billy the Kids in legend. The first is a tough little thug, a coward, a thief, and a cold-blooded murderer. The second is a romantic and sentimental hero, the brave and likable leader of an outnumbered band fighting for justice. The dominance of the second legend in our day marks his significance as the personification of a general type, the outlaw-hero.[12]

The image of Billy as a fiendish murderer who laughed as his victims died in agony lasted about twenty-five years after the Kid's death. Then, in 1903, with Walter Wood's play Billy the Kid, the trend reversed itself. Wood sentimentalized Billy, and suddenly writers excused his outlawry, calling it a result of extreme social provocation. Finally, in 1925, when Harvey Fergusson compared the Kid to Robin Hood, Billy achieved the full status of outlaw-hero.

Obviously this evolution places Billy the Kid in a special

position. Like Robin Hood, Billy exists outside the normal social boundaries and yet he is also a crusader for justice. This paradoxical status results in Billy's being victimized by the very society whose laws he violated. The Romantic idea of Billy as outlaw-hero, as an outsider, makes it possible for Billy to be an artist. This idea is not new; Ondaatje is working with the Romantic tradition of artist as outsider when he endows Billy with creative abilities.

Billy's voice and presence dominate the whole narrative from the beginning. Thus, when the Kid explains how he perceives, he reveals that the violence and alienation, which are so commonly associated with him and which in part made him so different from others who lived and died in the American southwest, are not merely meaningless labels history has forced upon him. Billy says,

> The others, I know, did not see the wounds appearing in the sky, in the air. Sometimes a normal forehead in front of me leaked brain gasses. Once a nose clogged right before me, a lock of skin formed over the nostrils, and the shocked face had to start breathing through mouth, but then the mustache bound itself in the lower teeth and he began to gasp loud the hah! hah! going strong--churned onto the floor, collapsed out, seeming in the end to be breathing out of his eye--tiny needle jets of air reaching into the throat. I told no one.[13]

Billy's use of words like "wounds," "shocked," "gasp," "churned," and "collapsed" suggests that, when Billy sees and interprets things, he does so in terms as violent as the action which the public accepts and expects. How the Kid perceives sets him apart from the rest of society as much as what he does. This correlation is not accidental. Billy's way of seeing reinforces his alienation and influences both his public actions and his artistic creations. His expression of his perceptions is characterized by sudden and violent changes in temperament and in language which reflect

his loss of control of the energy around and within him. The Kid's desire to control such energy, and his understanding of how that control can be lost, is suggested in a poem which is attributed to Billy and through which Ondaatje implies that his central image for Billy's violence is one of energy:

> I have seen pictures of great stars,
> drawings which show them straining to the centre
> that would explode their white
> if temperature and the speed they moved at
> shifted one degree.
>
> Or in the East have seen
> the dark grey yards where trains are fitted
> and the clean speed of machines
> that make machines, their
> red golden pouring which when cooled
> mists out to rust or grey.
>
> The beautiful machines pivoting on themselves
> sealing and fusing to others
> and men throwing levers like coins at them.
> And there is there the same stress as with stars,
> the one altered move that will make them maniac.[14]

Billy's desire to prevent "the one altered move," or at least to translate energy into artistic creations is implied in two of Billy's poems where the Kid writes of the control offered by a pencil. In the one poem, Billy compares his control of the pencil to the energy which continually assaults his body:

> / while I've been going on
> the blood from my wrist
> has travelled to my heart
> and my fingers touch
> this soft blue paper notebook
> control a pencil that shifts up and sideways
> mapping my thinking going its own way
> like light wet glasses drifting on polished wood.
>
> The acute nerves spark
> on the periphery of our bodies
> while the block trunk of us
> blunders as if we were
> those sun drugged horses

I am here with the range for everything
corpuscle muscle hair
hands that need the rub of metal
those senses that
that want to crash things with an axe
that listen to deep buried veins in our palms
those who move in dreams over your women night
near you, every paw, the invisible hooves
the mind's invisible blackout the intricate never
the body's waiting rut.[15]

In another poem, Billy implies how the pencil is able to harness his perceptions and create an image of him.

Am the dartboard
for your midnight blood
the bones' moment
of perfect movement
that waits to be thrown
magnetic into combat

a pencil
harnessing my face
goes stumbling into dots[16]

Billy's implication that art offers at least momentary control of the energy which seems always about to erupt into some kind of violence is substantiated by Billy's use of poetry. This sense of control is reflected in the difference between the prose and the poetry in the entire book. The majority of the prose sections, whether they are concerned with the traditional stories or present scenes of Billy's personal and social life, contain accounts of action over which Billy exercises little control. In the poetry, on the other hand, Billy strives to either keep or regain control. Billy, therefore, uses poetry both to elevate tone and to control energy. That is, the elevated tone heightens the seriousness of the matter under consideration while the form and style of the poetry forces a disciplined adherence to rules that helps Billy control the energy of the language and images. For example, at the end

of the prose passage which describes Billy's first night with the Chisums, Billy describes the scene when he and John return from viewing Sallie's animals. Billy says,

> Half way back to the house, the building we moved towards seemed to be stuffed with something yellow and wet. The night, the dark air, made it all mad. That fifteen yards away there were bright birds in cages and here John Chisum and me walked, strange bodies. Around us total blackness, nothing out there but a desert for seventy miles or more, and to the left, a few yards away, a house stuffed with yellow wet light where within the frame of a window we saw a woman move carrying fire in a glass funnel and container towards the window, towards the edge of the dark where we stood.[17]

The night is so dark and the animals are so unusual that the entire scene takes on a sinister quality. On the very next page, all the madness Billy associates with the night breaks loose in a somewhat confusing though controlled madness.

> (To come) to where eyes will
> move in head like a rat
> mad since locked in a biscuit tin all day
> stampeding mad as a mad rats legs
> bang it went was hot
> under my eye
> was hot small bang did it
> almost a pop
> I didnt hear till I was red
> had a rat fyt in my head
> sad billys body glancing out
> body going as sweating white horses go
> reeling off me wet
> scuffing down my arms
> wet horse white
> screaming wet sweat round the house
> sad billys out
> floating barracuda in the brain[18]

The content betrays Billy's violence and loss of control, but the form contains and shapes the energy; the form, at least momentarily, lets Billy regain control of the energy he was unable to master when in the darkness.

As an artist, then, Billy hopes to use the way he perceives in

order to produce poems which channel his violence into controlled forms. That Billy understands that controlling the form is not necessarily the same as mastering the content is revealed in a poem where Billy attempts, in the second stanza, to reverse the order of the lines in the first stanza:

> His stomach was warm
> remembered this when I put my hand into
> a pot of luke warm tea to wash it out
> dragging out the stomach to get the bullet
> he wanted to see when taking tea
> with Sallie Chisum in Paris Texas.
>
> With Sallie Chisum in Paris Texas
> he wanted to see when taking tea
> dragging out the stomach to get the bullet
> a pot of luke warm tea to wash it out
> remembered this when I put my hand into
> his stomach was warm[19]

Billy loses command of the material; the second stanza does not make sense, and therefore, the poem fails.

Billy also has pretensions to being a prose writer and a song writer. One example in particular suggests Billy's desire to make his descriptive prose passages both accurate and entertaining. Billy begins an account, stops, and begins over, making what he feels are the necessary changes.

> Down the street was a dog. Some mut spaniel, black and white. One dog, Garrett and two friends, stud looking, came down the street to the house, to me.
>
> Again.
>
> Down the street was a dog. Some mut spaniel, black and white. One dog, Garrett and two friends came down the street to the house, to me.
>
> Garrett takes off his hat and leaves it outside the door. The others laugh. Garrett smiles, pokes his gun towards the door. The others melt and surround.[20]

That Billy invents this scene is revealed when he says, "All this I would have seen if I was on the roof looking."[21]

The Kid, however, is neither entirely serious, nor totally preoccupied with Garrett's hunting him down. In fact, Billy offers a song, ostensibly written by himself, which reveals his sense of humour while simultaneously making Angela D. (his lover) into a ballad figure:

> Miss Angela Dickinson
> blurred in the dark
> her teeth are a tunnel
> her eyes need a boat
>
> Her mouth is an outlaw
> she swallow your breath
> a thigh it can drown you
> or break off your neck
>
> Her throat is a kitchen
> red food and old heat
> her ears are a harp
> you tongue till it hurt
>
> Her toes take your ribs
> her fingers your mind
> her turns a gorilla
> to swallow you blind[22]

What the second narrative strand most obviously illustrates, then, is Billy's efforts as an artist. Yet, because Ondaatje wishes to provide a complete picture of Billy's private self, he must also illustrate the Kid's interaction with friends. In The Collected Works, Billy's best friends are Sallie and John Chisum and Angela D., and Ondaatje exemplifies the peace, affection, and friendship the Kid finds with his friends through Billy's reports of his visits to the Chisum ranch. Interestingly, Ondaatje makes some major alterations to the Chisum ranch. He leads the reader to believe that the Chisum ranch is quite small, miles out in the desert, with Sallie and John the only people there most of the time. In

fact, John Chisum was a large landowner and cattle baron whose house and influence were anything but small. Here is how Burns describes the ranch:

> Chisum abandoned Bosque Grande as his headquarters in 1873, and moving down the Pecos forty miles, established South Spring Ranch, which remained his home to the end of his life. Where the South Spring River gushes from the earth in a never-failing giant spring of crystal water, he built a home fit for a cattle king and made it one of the show places of the Southwest. Cottonwood trees brought from Las Vegas by mule pack-train he planted about his dwelling and in two winding rows that formed a noble avenue a quarter of a mile long leading from road to residence. He sowed eight hundred acres to alfalfa. He brought fruit trees from Arkansas and set out a vast acreage in orchards of apple, pear, peach, and plum. He imported roses from Texas to make a hedge about the house, and scarlet tanagers and bob-white quail from Tennessee--birds unknown to New Mexico--and set them at liberty in the oases of beauty he had created.
>
> Here, with royal hand, Chisum dispensed frontier hospitality. His great, rambling, one-story adobe house, with verandas at front and rear, stood on the highway between Texas and New Mexico, and the stranger was as free as the invited guest to bed and board for as long as he wanted to stay, and no money or questions asked. Every day at breakfast, dinner, and supper, the table in the dining hall was set for twenty-six guests, twelve on each side and one at each end, and hardly a meal was served in ten years at which every chair was not occupied.[23]

At the end of The Collected Works, Ondaatje states that he has "edited, rephrased, and slightly reworked the originals."[24] While this statement is true when applied to many of Ondaatje's borrowings, it is not true when applied here. In fact, he has created a completely new ranch, and made the Chisums' lifestyle opposite to the one they had in reality. In short, the image Ondaatje presents of the Chisums is largely his own invention.

This invention is of vital importance to Billy's private self. The isolation of the ranch and the simple lifestyle of the Chisums become synonymous with a quiet, still place in Billy's life. In such a situation Ondaatje does not need to justify Billy's actions; rather the poet simply

illustrates the Kid's peace, affection and friendship without sentimentalizing Billy. For example, Billy's first descriptions of the ranch occur in his mind as he and Angela D. ride towards the house. The passage is characterized by reminiscences of the Chisums' simple domestic routines--"They do not talk much, Sallie and John Chisum, but from here I can imagine the dialogue of noise--the scraping cup, the tilting chair, the cough, the suction as an arm lifts off a table breaking the lock that was formed by air and the wet of the surface"[25]--and by images of peace and beauty:

> And Sallie like a ghost across the room moving in white dresses, her hair knotted as always at the neck and continuing down until it splayed and withered like eternal smoke half way between the shoulder blades and the base of cobble spine.
>
> Yes. In white long dresses in the dark house, the large bones somehow taking on the quietness of the house. Yes I remember.[26]

The Chisum ranch, then, allows Billy to act naturally. Ondaatje simply lets the reader see Billy functioning in a natural environment. And Angela D. fits comfortably into this environment. In fact, Billy takes her there; she does not impose her presence and therefore she does not disrupt the setting:

> Forty miles ahead of us, in almost a straight line, is the house. Angela D. and I on horses moving towards it, me bringing her there.[27]

Billy introduces the Chisums with this memory of the simple domestic life they lead. The personal reassurance he discovers at the ranch is reflected in his confident recollection of their routine. His recollection suggests that, for Billy, the Chisums' ability to get along with each other, which is reflected in the quiet routines they follow, make them the ideal couple. In particular, Billy treats Sallie as if she were the

ideal woman. Because Billy brings Angela D. to the ranch, she fits comfortably into the Chisums' pattern, and Billy begins to speak of her in the same terms he uses when he speaks of Sallie. Billy's adoration of Angela, however, is based on their sexual relationship, while his adoration of Sallie, even though he admires her beauty, is not. For example, many of the sexual scenes between Angela and Billy take place at the Chisum ranch, and, after one particular night, Billy describes Angela as follows:

> She is so brown and lovely, the sun rim blending into lighter colours at her neck and wrists. The edge of the pillow in her mouth, her hip a mountain further down the bed. Beautiful ladies in white rooms in the morning.[28]

Billy's use of the plural "ladies" implies that Billy includes both Angela and Sallie in his classification. Because the Kid has established earlier how and why he adores Sallie, his comment here raises Angela to the same status as Sallie, while it also limits the reasons for Billy's admiration. Whatever his reservations about Angela are, Billy and Angela clearly find comfort and companionship at the Chisum ranch.

In contrast to the peace and beauty Billy and Angela D. find at the Chisums' is the exclusion Pat Garrett experiences even when he is a guest at the ranch. Garrett represents the "one altered move" which causes a change in the pattern of life at the Chisums'. For example, Billy brings Angela to the Chisums', but Garrett who "had been caught in the Mescalero that August for two days"[29] stumbles into the ranch by himself, deaf; he also falls asleep when Sallie, John, Angela D., Billy and Garrett are on the porch drinking and talking. Billy seems the most upset at Garrett's presence. He says,

> The thing here is to explain the difference of this evening. That in fact the Chisum verandah is crowded. It could of course hold a hundred more, but that John and Sallie and I have been used to other distances, that we have talked slowly through nights expecting the long silences and we have taken our time thinking the replies. That one was used to the space of black that hung like cotton just off the porch lights' spill.[30]

What Garrett's stay at the ranch points to is Billy's precarious control of energy which, unlike the energy which holds the stars in position, inevitably causes a change in patterns which the Kid finds have a calming effect on him. This change usually leads to a violent response from Billy as he attempts to eliminate what he sees as the cause of the disruption. The paradigm for this potential violence in Billy is his story about his stay in a deserted barn.

The passage begins with a description of the harmony Billy finds while staying in the barn.

> For that week then I made a bed of the table there and lay out my fever, whatever it was. I began to block my mind of all thought. Just sensed the room and learnt what my body could do, what it could survive, what colours it liked best, what songs I sang best. There were animals who did not move out and accepted me as a larger breed. I ate the old grain with them, drank from a constant puddle about twenty yards away from the barn. I saw no human and heard no human voice, learned to squat the best way when shitting, used leaves for wiping, never ate flesh or touched another animal's flesh, never entered his boundary. We were all aware and allowed each other. The fly who sat on my arm, after his inquiry, just went away, ate his disease and kept it in him. When I walked I avoided the cobwebs who had places to grow to, who had stories to finish. The flies caught in those acrobat nets were the only murder I saw.[31]

Unfortunately, the peace and the tranquility of the barn is destroyed by the actions of the rats who come in from the granary beside the barn:

> In [the granary] a hundred or so rats, thick rats, eating and eating the foot deep pile of grain abandoned now and fermenting so that at the end of my week, after a heavy rain storm burst the power in those seeds and brought drunkenness into the minds

> of those rats, they abandoned the sanity of eating the food before them and turned on each other and grotesque and awkwardly because of their size they went for each other's eyes and ribs so the yellow stomachs slid out and they came through the door and killed a chipmunk--about ten of them onto that one striped thing and the ten eating each other before they realised the chipmunk was long gone so that I, sitting on the open window with its thick sill where they couldnt reach me, filled my gun and fired again and again into their slow wheel across the room at each boommm, and reloaded and fired again and again till I went through the whole bag of bullet supplies--the noise breaking out the seal of silence in my ears, the smoke sucked out of the window as it emerged from my fist and the long twenty yard space between me and them empty but for the floating bullet lonely as an emissary across and between the wooden posts that never returned, so the rats continued to wheel and stop in the silences and eat each other, some even the bullet. Till my hand was black and the gun was hot and no other animal of any kind remained in that room but for the boy in the blue shirt sitting there coughing at the dust, rubbing the sweat of his upper lip with his left forearm.[32]

The rats' drunken foray into the peace of the barn forces Billy to take drastic measures. In fact, the rats cause the Kid to lose control; he cannot stop shooting until all the rats are dead. Clearly, the rats constitute the "one altered move" that makes Billy maniac, just as eating the fermented grain is "the one altered move" for the rats. This illustration of the ease with which "one altered move" can trigger a violent response in Billy suggests that the correlation between the two narrative strands is exemplified through and reinforced by Billy's tenuous control of energy.

Let me here briefly review the role of each narrative strand. One strand works to sustain the public's impression of Billy through Ondaatje's inclusion of some of the notorious stories about Billy and through the use of character references. Ondaatje relies on his "documents" for the details he presents in these parts of the narrative. The second narrative strand complements the first by illustrating how Billy, as an individual, sees and interprets life. This second strand is

characterized by examples of how Billy seeks self-expression through artistic means, and how, even at the Chisum ranch, Billy experiences the precariousness of his control of energy. These two narrative strands, however, are not presented as two distinct parts of The Collected Works. Rather, Ondaatje interrupts the chronology of the material from the "documents" with the Kid's expressions of his social and domestic experiences. The fragmentation of the narrative strands leads to the separation of portions of individual traditional stories, as I indicated with Ondaatje's account of the action at Stinking Springs. Ondaatje, however, further accentuates this fragmentation by fragmenting the time scheme. This particular treatment of time permits shifts in the chronological order of events, as well as the juxtaposition of various motifs.

The fragmentation of the time scheme is most obvious from Ondaatje's changes in the chronological order of events. For example, the first portion of the account of what happens at Stinking Springs describes how Charlie Bowdre is shot, but, much earlier in the book, Billy describes Bowdre's dying:

> When I caught Charlie Bowdre dying
> tossed 3 feet by bang bullets giggling
> at me face tossed in a gaggle
> he pissing into his trouser legs in pain
> face changing like fast sunshine o my god
> o my god billy I'm pissing watch
> your hands
> while the eyes grew all over his body[33]

Or again, on the second page of The Collected Works there is a poem which lists the people killed by Billy and by Pat Garret and others. The stories which describe the deaths of many of the people in this list do not appear until later in the collection. While this simple disruption

of the chronological order of events helps create suspense and anticipation, the complexity of the book and Ondaatje's successful integration of Billy's public image and private self come from the juxtaposition of motifs.

The simplest juxtaposition is the placing of material associated with one narrative strand next to material associated with the other strand, as, for example, happens when the conclusion of Billy's capture at Stinking Springs immediately precedes a poem in which Billy describes one morning when he wakes up and Charlie Bowdre is cooking, or when Billy's description of how he dislikes the smell of flowers immediately follows Ondaatje's borrowed description of Tunstall's murder. This alternating of material helps reveal the similarities between the Kid's public image and private self. However, while the fragmented time scheme allows the juxtaposition of these scenes, it also helps create the theme of the betrayal of Billy, and this theme clearly makes Garrett the villain. As Steckmesser says,

> The theme of 'betrayal' has been carefully pointed up by Bonney's biographers and has gripped the folk imagination. Time and again we are told that the Kid would have settled down and become a law-abiding citizen if only the man hunters had given him half a chance. But Governor Wallace 'double-crossed' the Kid by reneging on a promise of amnesty. Garrett was a Judas who tracked down his friend for a few silver dollars.[34]

In The Collected Works, this theme is expressed through the contrast of scenes in which Garrett hunts Billy down and in which, at an earlier time, Billy and Garrett were friends who shared numerous experiences at the Chisum ranch. The contrast, however, is not only suggested through the scenes. Rather, Ondaatje carefully distinguishes the control which Garrett possesses from the precariousness of Billy's control. Ondaatje includes an episode about Garrett which corresponds to Billy's episode in

the deserted barn. This passage explains how Garrett had "the ability to kill someone on the street walk back and finish a joke."[35] Garrett determines the "one altered move" and rather than blocking things out of his mind as Billy did, he "forced himself to disintegrate his mind."[36] Thus, at the end of his ordeal, "His mind learned to be superior because of the excessive mistakes of those around him."[37] This distinction between Billy and Garrett is emphasized again in Garrett's account of his meeting Billy at the Chisums:

> Bonney was that weekend, and always was, charming. He must, I thought, have seduced Angie by his imagination which was usually pointless and never in control. I had expected him to be the taciturn pale wretch--the image of the sallow punk that was usually attached to him by others. The rather cruel smile, when seen close, turned out to be intricate and witty. You could never tell how he meant a phrase, whether he was serious or joking. From his eyes you could tell nothing at all. In general he had a quick, quiet humour.[38]

Garrett's description of Billy points to his dislike of an imagination which is not in control of the situation. Billy's imagination causes the Kid problems because he loses control of energy; Garrett seems only to use his imagination to anticipate the mistakes of others. Billy's attempts at self expression (his poems) are full of energy; Garrett's are dead: he collects stuffed birds.

Fragmentation, then, aids Ondaatje's presentation of the complexities he finds not only in the legend itself, but also in what he believes is a more authentic voice for Billy than the one attributed to the Kid in the records of others. Moreover, this fragmentation which helps relate the more authentic voice and Billy's legendary status allows Ondaatje to include ideas which are not necessarily an obvious part of either the narrative strands or the themes of violence and betrayal.

Earlier I suggested that Ondaatje uses Billy as his surrogate--a point supported by Ondaatje's last entry in the book: a photograph of himself as a young boy dressed in a cowboy suit. By making Billy his surrogate, Ondaatje can include comments which suggest the difficulty of capturing and fixing an accurate image of Billy. Ondaatje does this through Billy's interests in Frank James, in a comic book fantasy about the Kid, and in photographs of himself.

The story about Frank James appears between the first part of the account of Stinking Springs and a poem about Angela Dickinson. This story is not introduced by a specific speaker; it is offered only as an account Jim Payne's grandfather told to Jim Payne. What this story illustrates is the gap between historic reality and legend (as it is developed in Hollywood movies and books):

> It was in a Los Angeles movie theatre. After the amnesty he was given, Frank had many jobs. When Jim's grandfather met him, he was the doorman at the Fresco Theatre. GET YOUR TICKET TORN UP BY FRANK JAMES the poster said, and people came for that rather than the film. Frank would say, 'Thanks for coming, go on in'.
> Jim's grandfather asked him if he would like to come over and have a beer after the film, but Frank James said 'No, but thank you' and tore up the next ticket. He was by then an alcoholic.[39]

The fact that there is no comment of any kind implies there is a parallel between James' story and Billy's story. Perhaps fortunately for the Kid, the governor denied the amnesty he promised, and maybe saved Billy from a fate like Frank James'.

The comic book fantasy which appears after Billy's death also is not introduced or commented upon. Here, Ondaatje implies the ease with which the material about Billy's life can be transformed into complete fantasy. In fact, because there is no suggestion of who the author of

the comic book is,[40] this fantasy might be attributed to Billy which would accentuate Ondaatje's suggestion of the difficulty an artist has controlling his material.

Billy's interest in photography, however, most clearly illustrates the problem of capturing and fixing an accurate image of himself. From the very first page, the reader is struck by the contrast between what is offered as a picture and the explication of the photographic technique:

> *I send you a picture of Billy made with the Perry shutter as quick as it can be worked--Pyro and soda developer. I am making daily experiments now and find I am able to take passing horses at a lively trot square across the line of fire--bits of snow in the air--spokes well defined--some blur on top of wheel but sharp in the main--men walking are no trick--I will send you proofs sometime. I shall show you what can be done from the saddle without ground glass or tripod--please notice when you get the specimens that they were made with the lens wide open and many of the best exposed when my horse was in motion.*[41]

Huffman, the man who makes the statements, is clear in his description of technique, and, as it stands, there is nothing unusual about the comments. But there is no picture; all the reader is given is an empty frame. From the beginning, then, the reader confronts what is also Ondaatje's (and Billy's) problem: pinpointing an accurate image of Billy the Kid. The difficulty of definition is complicated further by the suggestion that photographs can only inadequately capture an image. To illustrate this point, Billy again offers a blank where a photograph should be, but this time he lets Paulita Maxwell comment on the photograph.

> *In 1880 a travelling photographer came through Fort Sumner. Billy posed standing in the street near Old Beaver Smith's saloon. The picture makes him rough and uncouth.*
>
> *The expression of his face was really boyish and pleasant. He may have worn such clothes as appear in the picture out on the range, but in Sumner he was careful of his personal appearances*

> *and dressed neatly and in good taste. I never liked the picture. I don't think it does Billy justice.*[42]

There is no picture from which the reader can judge the accuracy of Paulita Maxwell's comments, but the reader can make certain assumptions about Ondaatje's intentions from the way he changes the passage from Burns' The Saga. Most important is the rearrangement of sentences within the paragraph. The original reads:

> "Billy posed for it standing in the street near Old Beaver Smith's saloon. I never liked the picture. I don't think it does Billy justice. It makes him look rough and uncouth. The expression of his face was really boyish and very pleasant. He may have worn such clothes as appear in the picture out on the range, but in Fort Sumner he was careful of his personal appearance and dressed neatly and in good taste."[43]

Ondaatje's division into paragraphs and the rearrangement of sentences so that the judgements "I never liked the picture" and "I don't think it does Billy justice" occur at the end emphasize the suggestion that even pictures are unable to capture all the subtle nuances of any one person's personality.

Billy's interest in Frank James, fantasy, and photographs indirectly defines Ondaatje's problems with fixing an image of Billy. That is, the incorporation of these interests both enlarges Billy's area of influence (which makes Billy the person harder to define because harder to confine) and points to the artistic difficulties Ondaatje experiences trying to shape and confine a person whose legendary status has already taken him beyond the limitations imposed by historic reports.

The Collected Works of Billy the Kid is not an easy book to understand, but neither is it a jumble of fragments which have gone maniac. Problems exist because of particular changes in and additions to the presentation of the image of Billy which characterize earlier works about

him. Ondaatje's book does not pretend to be a complete biography, but there are biographical elements in it. The Kid's life is not merely reported from an omniscient point of view; Billy speaks in the first person, and other people besides Billy comment on issues which affect and interest the Kid. This addition of Billy's voice, combined with examples of his artistic efforts and the comments of others, provides access to both Billy's public image and his private self.

Yet, Ondaatje's concern goes beyond even the addition of Billy's personal perceptions and interests. His explorations of documents depicting Billy's life and times reveal that not only was the Kid's voice and point of view absent, but that there was wherever Billy went an energy which infused events with tension, and this tension seemed always at the point of explosion. The necessity of sustaining the legend, as well as the method Ondaatje uses to encourage the perpetuation of Billy's image which the legend creates, have been overlooked by most critics. Much of The Collected Works consists of material borrowed from other books; Ondaatje's major source is Burns' The Saga of Billy the Kid. While critics are willing to acknowledge this source, many fail to note that the majority of the details in the manhunts, the deaths of Tom O'Folliard and Charlie Bowdre, and the details in the ostensible newspaper interview come from Burns. As well, actual quotations by Paulita Maxwell, Sallie Chisum, and others who are not named which are not in italics also come from Burns, as do reminiscences and the description of Tunstall's death. Ondaatje gives the source for some of these quotations, but for others no source is given. Ondaatje also borrows from Huffman, from an account written by Deputy John W. Poe and he includes a whole comic book fantasy. Only one reason accounts for

such extensive use of sources: Ondaatje wishes to perpetuate the image of Billy which these sources present. To take away the romance and the intrigue associated with the legend is to divest Billy of his power and his charisma. Thus, Ondaatje rearranges, reworks, and sometimes rewrites what he borrows from his documents in order to nourish the legend.

Billy's public image is characterized by energy which at some point during every notorious event attributed to him is translated into violence. When Ondaatje creates a private self for Billy, he uses his discovery of this violence which seems to follow the Kid around to characterize how Billy sees and interprets life. That is, Ondaatje does not simply provide the same stories with Billy as speaker; he gives Billy another dimension, a private self, which the processes of making him a legendary hero had taken away. And, Ondaatje's source for the Kid's personality traits are found in the documents Ondaatje uses to sustain Billy's public image. Thus, Billy's private self reflects the violent tendencies which identify his public image. Yet, Ondaatje's critical readings of the documents also suggested to him that if the energy in the stories about Billy could be harnessed or controlled, then that same energy could find expression in artistic forms rather than in violence. Ondaatje could present Billy as an artist who attempts to control energy; the Kid could express himself through artistic means. The documents suggest to Ondaatje that this presentation of Billy is possible through the status they give to Billy. That is, the Romantic idea of Billy as outlaw-hero and outsider makes plausible the presentation of Billy as an artist; Ondaatje is working with the Romantic tradition of artist as outsider. In order to complete his re-creation of Billy, Ondaatje also illustrates how the Kid reacts to friends and events in situations where

he is not threatened by those who hunt him down. These domestic scenes, however, also reveal Billy's struggle to control the energy within and around him. The complete picture of the Kid, then, illustrates the image the public knows, as well as providing examples of Billy's domestic life and his attempts at self-expression through art.

The integration of these public and private aspects of Billy's life Ondaatje suggests through entwining the narrative strand associated with Billy's public image and the narrative strand associated with Billy's private self. This entwining, coupled with Ondaatje's adoption of a fragmented time scheme, gives to the book a form much like the life which Billy led: the action rises and falls, energy is controlled or bursts into violence, famous stories are interrupted or followed by newly invented details about Billy's private self.

What Ondaatje offers in The Collected Works is, in its simplest sense, a version of the legend in which Billy himself substantiates and adds to the traditional stories about him. Ondaatje's reliance on Burns helps make certain the perpetuation of the romance associated with the Kid. But, in a more complex sense, Ondaatje offers something quite new. Letting Billy tell most of the story makes the exploration of Billy's private self possible. The responsibility for Billy's heroism is still Burns'. Ondaatje reorders the events, but not the details; original details are concerned primarily with those parts of the Kid's life which have never been explored before. In short, Ondaatje does not tamper with the legend; he adds new dimensions. And the new dimensions come, at least in part, from the kind of empathy Ondaatje has for Billy.

Ondaatje empathizes with Billy's difficulty controlling and shaping the energy within and around him. The problems Billy has reflect

the problems Ondaatje faces in his attempts to shape and control a complete image of Billy. The energy which characterizes Billy's stories is so diffuse that creating an accurate model is more difficult than turning the legend into fantasy. In The Collected Works, Billy himself seems to understand this, as his interest in ideas which reveal various approaches to and conceptions of his image reveal. Yet Ondaatje's interests go beyond his desire to suggest that Billy understands and is intrigued by his own image. As an artist, Billy virtually becomes Ondaatje's surrogate. Although total identification of one with the other is unreasonable, the type of artist Ondaatje makes Billy into allows Ondaatje to reveal as much about his own difficulties with Billy as it allows him to illustrate Billy's artistic efforts. That is, as an artist Billy reveals Ondaatje's problems as he reveals himself. As his surrogate, then, Billy implies Ondaatje's problems in much the same way as Ondaatje uses his book to comment on Billy.

In the deserted barn episode, Billy suggests his desire to express himself through artistic means; he says that he blocked his mind in order that he could sense the room, discover what colours he liked best and what songs he sang best. Each of these desires, as well as everything in his collected works, is of concern to Billy personally; virtually everything in the book affects the romantic image of the Kid. When considered in this way, Billy becomes his own troubadour. He sings about, defines, and comments on himself and on everything that affects his life. As troubadour and surrogate Billy supplies a voice which provides access to his public image and his private self. The accuracy of this voice is substantiated by Pat Garrett in the third last entry of the book. In an exchange with John W. Poe, Garrett says,

"I'm sure it was the Kid," responded Garrett, "for I knew his voice and could not have been mistaken."[44]

In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Ondaatje is able to offer two new dimensions to the legend of Billy the Kid. First, he completes Billy's image by providing a private as well as a public side to Billy (he makes Billy a thinking and feeling human being). And second, he makes Billy an artist. Because these aspects of Billy are intimately tied to the traditional image of the Kid, none of the romance is lost and Billy represents the artist-outsider. Ondaatje's desire to nourish the legend, to perpetuate the image of Billy which legend bestows upon him, in combination with the private self Ondaatje bestows upon Billy results in a figure of the Kid which is more complete than the ones presented in previous biographies. By way of his presentation of two narrative strands which define Billy's public image and private self through the Kid's tenuous control of energy, Ondaatje completes his idea of Billy the Kid and transforms him from a legendary hero to a mythic figure.

CHAPTER VI

GEORGE BOWERING'S GENÈVE

In 1971, ten years after George Bowering became one of the founding editors of Tish magazine, he published Genève. In this book, Bowering attempts, through using the thirty-eight picture cards of the Geneva Tarot pack, to explore his connections with the collective unconscious to which the symbols on these cards function as keys. This exploration Bowering hopes will help him reveal and resolve personal problems which he says he was experiencing at the time. In this way, Bowering's inquiries are similar to the expression of personal interests which characterize Gwendolyn MacEwen's The Armies of the Moon and Michael Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid. But Bowering's adoption of the phenomenological techniques he learned during the Tish experience precludes either MacEwen's kinetic sense of myth or Ondaatje's adoption of a surrogate who illustrates the poet's problems. Bowering meditates upon the picture on each card, but because he does not know the order of the cards and because after he writes a poem for a card, he turns the picture over, each illustration is considered in isolation and, therefore, other than the poet's personal involvement in each meditation, the relationship of the poems to each other is difficult to discern. This difficulty is compounded by Bowering's refusal to acknowledge the traditional meanings which are associated with the Tarot; he simply denies the connections to myth inherent in the cards. The narrative in Genève, then, is sustained and controlled by the poet's interaction with

the cards. However, this narrative is weakened by Bowering's concern only with the card immediately in front of him and by his deliberate reduction of the meanings of the picture on each card. In fact, Bowering will admit that he "dissembles" and this suggests that his method prevents synthesis, and, therefore, defeats him. Many of the reasons for Genève's failure are a direct result of Bowering's attempt to create an extended poem which puts into practice what he learned from his involvement with Tish.

In 1961, George Bowering became one of the five founding editors of Tish magazine. Although Bowering had been publishing poems in Eastern Canada, these poems were "never the ones he wished to have published."[1] Along with Frank Davey, James Reid, Fredric Wah, and David Dawson, Bowering found in Tish an outlet not only for the poems he presumably wished to have published, but also for his critical theories. In an article entitled "Anything But Reluctant: Canada's Little Magazines," Frank Davey comments on Tish's intentions and accomplishments:

> Tish . . . seems to have crystallized its determination to re-make poetry a natural and spontaneous human occupation and rid it of the obscure and obviously 'poetic' creations of would-be 'artists.' Man not art, and the universality of human experience, are two of its battle-cries, and battle-cries they are, for its editors seem to have made a fetish out of belligerency. A lot of their poetry seems weak and irrelevant, yet some of it is powerful and does show that their attempts at 'natural' poetry have enabled them to write skilled and complex poems with the craft totally submerged and unobtrusive.[2]

Davey's statement underscores Tish's demand for a "natural" theory of poetry and poetic form, but does not itself exemplify the aggressive prose characteristic of the magazine which, as Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski suggest, became "the proselytizing agent and a subject of acrid debate with other magazines and groups."[3] For example, in the August 1963

issue of Tish, George Bowering announces his, and Tish's, hostility toward the "young romantics," while defending the Tish poets' praise of the Black Mountain poets. Bowering says:

> The Tish poets have striven for accuracy and clarity, and have turned their attention upon the factual things that make up the world, men included among them. The young romantics (chiefly from Eastern Canada and in the U.S., New York and California) don't seem to have the desire to work for accuracy. Instead of communicating they fall back on some intensity of feeling, hoping to inundate the reader with expressions of their own superhuman soul, interpreted by themselves. They scoop a lot of slush into the space between themselves and natural phenomena. They think they have to put poetry into things; they don't have the sense and determination to find the poetry that is already there.
>
> Often they think it isn't poetry unless they are wailing and screeching about some injury done to themselves. They regard nature as a personal enemy or at least a personal insult. They want to reconstruct the great chain of being, with themselves at top.
>
> Happily, over the past year and two-thirds, the Tish poets have resisted that kind of auto-advertisement. If they have too often proclaimed their Black Mountain forbears, that is more forgiveable than enshrining themselves as modern Rimbaud-type juvenile delinquents of the poesy game.[4]

Bowering's defence of a desire for accuracy, of a search for "factual things," and of a concentration on natural phenomena not only distinguishes the Tish poets from the "young romantics," but also states, or more precisely, restates, the Tish poets' alliance with "the 'movement' which had its origin in the Imagist theories of the early 1900's, was modified and explanded [sic] by the developing theories of William Carlos Williams, and culminated--for the Tish poets at least--in the theories of the Black Mountain writers."[5] And of the Black Mountain group, the critical writing of Charles Olson,[6] particularly in his essay "Projective Verse," drew and held the attention of these Canadian poets.

Paul Christensen has characterized the thrust of "Projective Verse" as a simple but sweeping reduction: "The essay was really a

polemic against the status quo in poetry at the time: the projective stance is what remains to the poet when the restraints of convention are removed from his craft."[7] In this "polemic," Olson defines what he believes to be the basis for structure in a poem; he stresses three distinguishing characteristics. First, is the "kinetics" of the poem: "A poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it (he will have some several causations), by way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader. . . . Then the poem itself must, at all points, be a high energy-construct and, at all points, an energy discharge."[8] Second, is the "principle" of its writing, "the law which resides conspicuously over such composition, and, when obeyed, is the reason why a projective poem can come into being. It is this: FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT."[9] Finally, there is the "process," that is, "how the principle can be made so to shape the energies that the form is accomplished. . . . ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION."[10] Olson is concerned with more than the structure of a poem, but it is from his interest in structure that his other dicta arise. For example, when a poet wishes to "make" a projective poem, he must, in order to fulfill Olson's maxims, concentrate on each line: ". . . it is the LINE that's the baby that gets, as the poem is getting made, the attention, the control, that it is right here, in the line, that the shaping takes place, each moment of the going. . . ,"[11] and if the line is to be made or "controlled" properly, then the poet must pay attention to his breathing: "Verse now, 1950, if it is to go ahead, if it is to be of <u>essential</u> use, must, I take it, catch up and put into itself certain laws and possibilities of the breath, of the breathing of the man who writes as well as of his listenings."[12] Warren Tallman

explains why Olson's prescriptions are important:

> 'Projective Verse' is a first blueprint for a unified movement in language of the poet's full intelligence as Olson names the parts and puts them together into a working model. His vehicle is speech, language from the mouth. The energies that Pound discerned are distributed and synchronized as intellect moves 'over' by way of the syllable, monitored by the ear, and emotion moves 'under' by way of the line, monitored by the breath, which is regulated in turn by the heart, the beat beat beat. The steering is handled by whatever it is that looks out through a man's eyes, actively, 'one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception.' Thus perception becomes the forwardness of speech while the feet, lowliest, pace of a rhythm or rhythms of the whole body of sound.[13]

The Tish poets' acceptance of Olson's principles is not merely verbal homage; rather, the group's alliance is clearly reflected in the opening issues of the magazine where the poets define the directions they believe poetry should take. For example, in the first issue Fredric Wah states, "Here is the poem as an energy preserving object. It must preserve the instants of the poets [sic] own dance with his environment--the melodies, rhythms, and structures found in unique contact with environment and response. I make the case for the consonants as beats and the vowels carrying the mellismatic color--our language is that real that it does have tones--essentially collisions of sound."[14] In the same issue, Frank Davey defines "stance" in poetry as "the poet being himself, and his poems in turn being evidence of his self."[15] The connection is even more explicit in George Bowering's editorial in Tish 2, where he says:

> I have come to realize (as has LeRoi Jones) that poetry now of us young fellers is the what how of the way we sound. . . . Because (Williams) that is how the poem works all right --the poet's job is to excruciate the natural rhythms, word clusters of his own culture's idiom, as controlled by the breath, syntax--to find natural association of object/action/ words.[16]

Wah, Davey and Bowering all echo Olson and Williams; Warren

Tallman explains the Tish poets' debt to Whitman as well as to Williams and Olson:

> What comes in with Whitman is an attempt to naturalize and humanize all those aspects of experience which earlier poets had attempted to intellectualize. He moves from myth on back to music, and his 'I have an intelligence of earth,' William Carlos Williams' 'No ideas but in things,' and Charles Olson's clincher, 'Man and external reality are so involved with one another that, for man's purposes, they had better be taken as one,' are some ABC's of the naturalizing process. These directives turn attention back to earth herself as the great rhythmic mother of all human activity, breathing out and breathing in. The actual seasons are restored to relevance as that cycle from birth to death to rebirth that figures in all thoughts about the ongoing nature of existence. . . . When such actual tides, cycles and rhythms are made primary, songs available to us by no more ambitious an act than opening our eyes, listening with our ears, and looking for ourselves in among the rhythms of our own footsteps.[17]

These "songs," as Tallman calls them, call attention to the Tish group's emphasis on sound. In the fourth issue of the magazine, Jamie Reid commands the poet to "Listen to the sound of it. . . . Listen to the strange music of your own voice in the poem,"[18] and George Bowering suggests, "Poetry, as a specialized form, combines the statement of the poet & a commitment to sound as the vehicle of the statement."[19]

Of course, Tish did more than merely print the theoretical biases of the editors and contributors; it also printed poetry, prose, and essays. But from the beginning the editors were particular about the type of works they would publish: "Tish will publish any poem, short story, or essay which its editors feel shows a direct relationship to Tish's siring movement."[20] And later, when Tish changes from a magazine to a poetry newsletter, the editors restate their preferences: "We print poems which conform to our taste, poems which move somewhat in the same direction as our own. This is true, not only of poems submitted by the readers, but of the poems submitted by the various co-editors as well.

The desired result is a selection of poetry which indicates our poetic stance, which defines our scene."[21]

And so, until 1963, when Frank Davey moved to Victoria, Fred Wah moved to New Mexico, James Reid promised to leave the continent, Lionel Kearns locked himself in his writing room for one year, and George Bowering went to Calgary,[22] the editors of Tish continued to write and publish poems which reflected their theoretical prejudices or prejudgments.

Bowering's adoption of and belief in the theories about writing poetry which were formulated during his involvement with Tish continued after each member of the original group went his own way. In fact, one of Bowering's more interesting attempts to practice what he had preached is his book Genève (1971) which is based upon the twenty-two cards of the major arcana and the sixteen court cards of the minor arcana in the Geneva Tarot pack. The pictures on these thirty-eight cards stimulate the poems which form Bowering's volume. Here, Bowering uses the illustrated cards of the Tarot to generate the general structure of his book. That is, because the picture cards are both limited in number and related to each other they provide a skeletal structure for his book. Yet, because these pictures are relevant to both individual and community, Bowering is free to fulfill what Davey defines as "stance": "the poet being himself and his poems in turn being evidence of his self." Bowering's meditations upon each card also permit him to fulfill what Olson's essay "Projective Verse" defines as "principle" and as "process." The form of each poem and of the entire book is never more than the extension of the content which means that in each poem what Bowering perceives in the picture leads immediately and directly to further perception. Unfortunately, in the process of satisfying these dicta,

Bowering limits the success of his extended form.

In his comments on the style and techniques he employs in Genève, Bowering reveals his denial of the Tarot cards' relevance to the community (he is interested only in personal revelation), and he admits his intention to ignore the meanings inherent in the cards; he also incorrectly believes that his concern with what is going on in his mind marks a new style of writing. Bowering says,

> . . . I'm doing a different kind of writing now. I don't know how to describe it. It has to do more with getting my head in a certain state and tracking down stuff that's in there, rather than attending to things that are outside, and writing something towards that. . . . There's a book coming out from Coach House called Genève, which deals with meditations on the much-used Tarot pack--without knowing anything about what they mean, as little as possible about what they mean--but just, like, finding out. I was going through very strange things emotionally and in my head at the time, so I would just use those pictures and let them spring off whatever was going on in my head. Genève took a year to write.[23]

It would seem, given Bowering's remarks, that Genève reveals a departure from what Bowering learned and preached in Tish. However, a close reading of Genève proves the exact opposite. In fact, as Frank Davey suggests in "A Note on Bowering's Genève," Bowering has achieved what many of his earlier poems only approximated. Davey begins his review with a paragraph which reflects many of the theories presented in Tish:

> Poetry's strongest adversary is the thought or reflection which outgrows its temporal impulse and interferes with further perception. It is here where thought begins its domination of time--a domination which becomes inevitably one of reality--that illusion, deception, artificiality arise. The thought itself steadily falls behind the unreflected perceptions to which the writer should have been taking note.[24]

Davey goes on to suggest that many of Bowering's early poems (1961-1962) fall victim to the problem he defines in his opening remarks. But Genève does not:

> In Genève (written 1969) we see a much different poet guarding against such presumption, aware, as Merleau-Ponty advises, that our ideas are only 'capable of being true provided we keep them open to the field of nature and culture which they must express.' How easy it would have been in this book of poems based on each of the thirty-eight trumps and court cards of the Tarot for Bowering to have determined an 'ideal' order for both the sequence of composition and the arrangement of poems in the published book. But to do this would be to overlook more significant possibilities. Thus Bowering blindly shuffles the cards before beginning writing the sequence, and in the writing examines each card only as it comes, not learning the order the cards have fallen into until they turn upwards to their writing.[25]

As both Bowering and Davey state, and as the volume itself reveals, Genève's framework is limited by the thirty-eight trumps and court cards of the Geneva Tarot pack, but that restriction is the only one which Bowering would like the reader to consider. At one point in his poem, he makes a statement which tries to persuade the reader that the actual ordering of the cards was not selected or determined by himself:

> I COULD PLAN more, I could
> get ready for them
> as they come over their hill.
> I could arrange their order,
> or predict their form-
> ation.[26]

The use of the conditional "could" implies that the action has not been carried out, that the position of the card has not been chosen, but it is curious that this statement does not occur until almost half way through the volume. However, although the fifteenth poem offers the most obvious declaration of the chance ordering of the cards, several other poems hint at the accidental sequence and support Bowering's assertion that he knows little about, or at least makes little use of, the traditional meanings and uses of the Tarot pack. For example, the seventh poem defines, generally, what the cards bring to Bowering, and what method Bowering

employs to determine the position of a card in his volume:

(THEY COME AT ME as over a hill
one by one, with weapon
or gift)[27]

Clearly, the figures offer either gifts or weapons; they are seen as wanting either to give something to or to take something away from Bowering. The reference to the hill is more complicated, but, since each card remains face down in a pile until turned over and placed on top of the card which preceded it, the hill must refer to the initial pile of cards. The fact that the figures also come "one by one" and that their interpretation does not depend on the cards which precede or follow denies Bowering the use of the cards for fortune telling, at least the traditional type of fortune telling.

The sixteenth poem reaffirms this practice of not assuming the meanings of the cards and not using the cards to predict the future:

(I MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS
about their meanings,
they
are such strangers to me; seeing them,
I will tell what they look like,

not in circles
but over their hill, me
the horizon.)[28]

The circle which Bowering refers to has to do with one traditional method used to predict from the cards. However, Bowering again insists that it is not a circle, but a hill which is important to his use of the cards, and also, that his goal is to "tell what they look like," not to assume their meanings. Bowering's periodic reminders of what he does not use the cards for limit the role of the cards in the book. Because the cards are not used to predict, their order of appearance is not very important, and

therefore, the poet prevents the reader's anticipation of a prediction or a conclusion which would make possible the answering of questions raised by Bowering and which would make plausible Bowering's adoption of the Tarot pack. These reminders seem only to impose limits on the reader's expectations and to imply the poet's decision not to determine the order of the poems. And Bowering does not let the reader forget that his encounters with particular cards are determined by chance. For example, in the thirtieth poem, which identifies the card by its proper name, Bowering questions the timing of its appearance:

> THE JUDGEMENT, YES, but why
> this early or
> why this late?[29]

Again, in the thirty-fourth poem, Bowering is surprised by the unexpected appearance of the WORLD:

> I'D FORGOTTEN TOO MUCH about it, till
> here it faces me unexpectedly,
>
> the World.[30]

With the thirty-sixth poem, the reminder to the reader is more subtle; here Bowering's encounter with the PAGE OF CUPS is defined by its association with a specific event in Bowering's life:

> ON THE DAY I HAVE THREE TEETH REMOVED
> I encounter this young man[31]

Finally, with the last poem, Bowering gives his final hint that although he knew of the existence of the Death card, it is by chance that it is the last to appear:[32]

> AS I FEARD the skeleton with the scythe
> is the last one to appear
> . . . . . .
> It was in the cards it should end with him.[33]

The sole purpose of the quoted portions of these seven poems, then, is to convince the reader of the unsolicited order and of the lack of prearrangement of the thirty-eight cards which stimulate the poems in the volume. Thus, although the volume is confined by the thirty-eight pictures, the form of Genève is random. Bowering attempts to extend or explode his boundaries by implying his adoption of the absolute freedom of chance. The volume, then, is void of any imposed pattern which leaves Bowering free to respond to the pictures on individual cards.

This liberty to respond to each card separately recalls William Carlos Williams' "No ideas but in things." For Bowering, the thing or object is the card, and "/f/rom the object emerges the poem."[34] In all, there are thirty-eight "objects" which Bowering looks at; one card inspires one poem, and, oddly enough, each poem is one page long. This inspiration created by one picture but limited by the thirty-eight pictures contained in the Tarot pack suggests what Jack Spicer defines as a serial poem:

> Spicer last summer defined a serial poem as a poem or group of poems written out of one impulse, during which the poet exercises no control over the voices dictating the poem. so the poet admits everything until he feels that the impulse has run its course.[35]

Bowering's method is to let each image "dictate" a poem; that is, Bowering "allows his imagination to roam freely over the tangible object of the card"[36] until the poem is complete. The decision to use the Tarot cards with pictures corresponds to his first and embracing impulse, but each picture in turn corresponds to his impulse to write a poem which "admits everything until he feels that impulse has run its course." Bowering has, then, not one, but thirty-nine impulses. Thus, while the

individual poems follow Spicer's dictates, Bowering's group of poems does not. Each poem is limited to what is dictated by the illustration on that particular card; once Bowering says all he feels there is to say about the picture, the process begins over again. Genève, then, consists of thirty-eight poems, each of which "admits everything until" the poet "feels that the impulse has run its course." The embracing impulse to use the Tarot is prevented from governing the whole book by Bowering's denial of the inherent relationships between the cards which prediction makes possible. And Spicer's belief that there is "no control over the voices dictating the poem" is also questionable. Eldon Garnet suggests, "To each poem he adds the poet Bowering interpreting how he personally fits into the card and its story, and describing how he is affected by the card."[37] This act of "describing" and "interpreting" in fact places Bowering in control. Each poem is confined to or limited by the picture which Bowering describes and interprets according to his personal experience. There is no voice other than Bowering's controlling or dictating the poems. The pictures stimulate, or bring to the surface, particular events and emotions which are Bowering's and Bowering's alone. Such a stance reminds the reader of Frank Davey's definition of "stance" as "the poet being himself, and his poems in turn being evidence of his self."[38] Even in Spicer's terms, then, Genève is not a serial poem, and both Garnet and the author of the description of Genève on the jacket cover are misleading by calling it one.

A more appropriate description of Genève's form is extended form. The book is limited to the cards in the Geneva Tarot which have pictures; each card has a different, a unique illustration. Therefore, within the limits created by these cards, are thirty-eight single poems,

each of which is complete in itself. Yet Bowering's design encourages the reading of the book as a single poem, and implies that in Genève "extended" refers to the interacting tension between the single identity offered in each poem and the single identity offered by the volume as a whole. For example, Bowering neither titles the poems nor numbers the pages which causes little or no interruption between poems. This detail, coupled with the fact that the only title given is the title Genève, which governs the whole book, suggests that the collection has formal properties which permit it to be read as a single poem. That is, the format suggests, first, that the significance of the title will become obvious as the reader progresses through the volume, second, that each poem follows logically from the poem which precedes without the need for formal interruptions which would signal a shift in point of view or theme, and third, that as a consequence of this logical progression, there will be a sense of completion when the final poem ends. By implication, the relevance of the cards to the speaker's inquiries will become obvious as the reader moves from poem to poem. The success of the narrative, therefore, is directly related to the function of the Tarot. The individual cards are related to all other cards because all come from the same Tarot and because the pictures on the Tarot are symbols which, through their interaction, function as keys to the collective unconscious. The order in which these cards fall after they are shuffled determines how the symbols are to be interpreted. While the Tarot cards without pictures are necessary for an accurate prediction, the picture cards do have particular unchanging meanings, and, therefore, the relationship inherent in the cards should help to create a bond between the poems, and this bond could be strengthened by the speaker who responds to each card.

Ideally, the speaker would be conscious of the order in which the cards fall and he would use his knowledge of the symbols to reveal what the cards suggest about the problems he explores. Knowledge of the symbols coupled with the speaker's interpretation not only could strengthen the bonds between poems but also could generalize the speaker's personal fears and desires which would, in effect, make the poems interesting and pertinent to the reader while satisfying the speaker's exploration of private fears and desires. The relevance of the Tarot, then, should come both from the speaker's response to the illustrations and from the meanings of the illustrations.

As poet/creator and speaker, Bowering's role carries with it the power of control; it would seem, then, that Bowering is in a position to shape and sustain the already implicit tension between single poems and the poem which is the volume, or, as Olson said, "one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception"[39]--both within individual poems and between poems. In part, the implicit tension is created by the random ordering of poems within the frame and by the reader's curiosity about which card will turn up next. But, Genève is not, as the author of the jacket cover states, "composed by daily dealing one card from the Tarot."[40] The composition of the volume was not restricted to thirty-eight days, and Bowering indicates this in poem thirteen:

> (I RETURN HERE after five weeks
> still looking for these
> pictures of a year)[41]

Thus, the volume's tension cannot come merely from day to day anticipation, since even the poet seems capable of leaving his writing for a period

without destroying his connection to the cards.

There should be, however, a double tension within Genève. The first tension is created by the order of the poems--an order which remains unchanged once the volume is published--and the suspended but potential disorder which Bowering implies through his insistence upon the uncontrolled ordering of the cards. The second tension should be created by Bowering's relationship with the cards. This tension potentially offers Bowering his greatest challenge, for here, the poet could have attempted to explore and thus call forth the centuries of mythic meaning inherent in the Tarot cards by observing and reporting his personal involvement with and response to the pictures on the cards. Frank Davey comments on poetry which explores this type of dynamic tension.

> In such a poetry the fundamental premise is that the poet can get answers to more than he has thought to ask--for the world, temporal thing that it is, necessarily keeps on speaking within and without. In this view truth is an ever developing thing, an interchange between phenomena including the poet; man's grace lies not in his stop-action rationality but in his openness to perception on perception.[42]

Elsewhere, Davey defines Bowering's method as "phenomenological--the examination of one's consciousness of events and opinions rather than the presentation of the events and opinions themselves."[43] Davey also implies that since "the poet can get answers to more than he has thought to ask . . . ," the poet must make numerous inquiries, both about himself and, in this case, about the cards. In fact, in his review "A Note on Bowering's Geneve," Davey analyzes how, through initially asking two questions (one about the card and one about himself), Bowering works several levels of consciousness into the thirty-third poem. At the end of his explication, Davey states,

> The self-awareness [Bowering's] ultimately holds, unexpectedly causing the card on which he had thought to speak to become a voice commenting itself on him.
>
> I'll never know what to say about him,
> try desperately as I can
> toward this end,
>
> fool.[44]

This explication of poem thirty-three illustrates Bowering's ability to handle the techniques learned from his experience with Tish. But Davey's praise of Bowering's phenomenological method, as exemplified through his analysis of the poem, points to how the Tish techniques do not properly prepare Bowering to fulfill the most interesting portion of the agreement he enters when he chooses to use the thirty-eight Tarot cards to structure his poem.

Bowering chooses a finite number of cards to create a frame to work within, yet within that frame he insists on a random form; he refuses to impose an internal structure. Therefore, the logic, the internal structure, must come from the interaction of the card and the poet. Since Bowering denies he uses the cards to predict, and since he denies he knows, or at least makes little use of, the traditional meanings of the cards, Bowering thus makes unavailable, both to himself and to the reader, any of the mythic connotations and implications which the pictures can offer. By refusing the cards the richness of their symbols, Bowering inevitably reduces each card to one dimension--no card has any meaning beyond the one Bowering assigns it. The relationship inherent in the cards cannot therefore be communicated to the reader, and thus there seems no reason for Bowering choosing the Tarot cards.

In Genève, the phenomenological method, when used as a means to raise and examine a personal consciousness, requires, as Davey points out,

numerous inquiries into the private reveries stimulated by the pictures. Because Bowering rejects the general and universal keys to the unconscious, as offered by the Tarot cards, his questions remain so tied to himself that he is in danger of losing the reader's interest--especially when so many questions remain unanswered, as they must because Bowering ignores the card's definition and thus has no source of information from which to draw a conclusion. For example, in the first poem, Bowering begins with a description of a knight on a horse, and then attempts to place himself in the picture by asking two questions:

> What, is that me he holds, not horse,
> but tree, I've so often calld myself?
> Can I be the flourisht weapon & anger
> of some club-man, some uniform
> in this picture red & blue?[45]

These queries could perhaps be left unanswered, if the poem went on to define something of Bowering's position, but the poem offers neither answers nor definition. Rather, the reader is left with another question.

> While bushes underfoot stand in peril
> of being smasht into hoof-markt dust
> that mad man will create & protect
> for my loneliness?[46]

The reader is left wondering whether Bowering sees himself as a victim, as a weapon to be wielded against something, and whether this knight will create and protect his loneliness. The reader is left anticipating, left expecting some kind of resolution which he hopes may be found in the next poem or poems; in short, the reader wants to know where these questions lead. But, when he turns to the next card, to the next poem, he finds Bowering does not pick up the previous questions. In fact, there is a new card, a new poem; the preceding picture has been put aside, the

following card is unknown. To put it simply, there is no completion, and thus the reader has no way to enter the poem because there is only a description of the picture and unanswered speculations by the speaker.

These questions, then, fail to promote understanding; in fact, they prevent comprehension. Since the poems are not connected, except through a speaker who is concerned only with the picture immediately in front of him, the questions prevent a sense of progression from poem to poem. In short, the reader does not know what the poet is talking about; his inquiries serve little or no purpose.

In the thirty-seventh poem, Bowering alleviates one problem--that of connecting poem thirty-seven to poem thirty-eight, which he accomplishes through his own speculation. Yet, three quarters of the poem consists of unanswered questions:

> Why
> does she wear armor
> beneath her loose robes?
>
> Why
> did the deep drug
> draw my fear & distrust
> & effort to free myself from my tormenters,
>
> Why
> will this woman
> fall in a moment into uncontrollable tears?
>
> Why
> is her right knee flext
> below the sword in her right hand,
> ready to strike?
>
> What have I opend
> to her eyes
> these thirty-seven pictures?
>
> Who
> is behind her?
> Who
> placed him there?[47]

If, in the penultimate poem in the volume, the poet cannot yet provide answers to any of these questions, the reader cannot help but lose patience--if in fact he has read this far. There still is no identified central issue or central person for Bowering to confront. Thus, the questions cannot be answered, and the reader cannot determine what Bowering is more conscious of now than he was at the outset of his volume.

Sometimes the questions are answered, but in these instances, the answers are directly concerned with individual cards and the terms of definition are so vague that they again fail to explicate Bowering's central issue. For example, Bowering asks himself about the MAGICIAN, "Why trust him?"[48] and answers this inquiry in a way that continues his description of the figure, but does not identify Bowering's major concern.

> It is not trust but relief,
> the rod he holds is no brutal weapon
> but a wand,
> for mercurial gesture.[49]

In poem seven, Bowering's concern is with all the "apparitions" in the deck. Here he does endeavor to bring the past and present together, but his vagueness prohibits precise interpretation of issues.

> (How many are they?
> Is it my mind
> throws up these apparitions,
> that they
> present their similar faces
>
> & regular oddments
> for my confusion
>
> from which I should learn?)
>
> What?
>
> That I have fears & curiosities,
> that with each turn of the wrist
> I confront the present.

I learn to create the past
I live in.[50]

These questions, then, do not bring the issues into focus. Since Bowering limits his speculations to single cards, he cannot identify or clarify concerns beyond his immediate confrontation, and, if the poet cannot formulate his argument, there is no way the reader can, or should, be expected to. This problem is compounded by Bowering's apparent lack of interest in the symbolism surrounding the Tarot. This lack of interest is reflected in some of the questions the poet asks about the cards. In poem two, Bowering asks of the woman who pours water into the lake, ". . . does it come endlessly / from her two earthen jugs / as the stars above her / include her head in their circle?"[51] In poem six he asks "IS HE OFFERING the flagon / or preparing to leap head-first into it?"[52] Later, he asks "Is she temperate in using those wings?"[53] In reference to the QUEEN OF CLUBS, Bowering ponders "What can I make of her?"[54] And later, he wants to know why the chariot is pulled in two directions.[55] Also, he wonders, "WHY WOULD THE FOOL / wear such knowing face?"[56] Finally, all the questions about JUSTICE in poem thirty-seven suggest total ignorance of this card. If Bowering had made use of the inherent symbols, these questions would be unnecessary because what Bowering questions is the pictorial representation of the symbol. Because he ignores the symbolic meanings, the poet must leave the questions unresolved. Because questions are unresolved, and because the reason for Bowering's queries is never formulated, the investigations remain interesting only to Bowering; Bowering withholds the answers and, therefore, a sense of completion, a sense of synthesis, is denied the reader. In short, whatever else Bowering excludes from Genève, he certainly excludes the reader.

The reader's feeling of being left out is made greater through the poet's allusion to his acquaintances' first names. In poem twelve he says, "My friend Roy / has written a small book / about last weekend,"[57] and in poem twenty-three, he states,

> (That is the fear made subtle, George,
> ask Roy,
> who dissembld even in
> the midst of his vision, even
> in the poem--)[58]

These are not literary allusions; they mean nothing to the reader unless he can identify Roy, and, if he is not a friend of Bowering's, he has no way of identifying who Roy is. If Roy cannot be identified, neither can his poems. Bowering seems determined to keep his poem unavailable to all but a select and privileged group of friends.

The problems raised through unresolved questions and the reader's exclusion do prohibit the reader's comprehension of what Bowering is actually talking about, but the most disturbing element in the volume is Bowering's confession that he cannot master the form, that he cannot master the structure he chose to work within. In short, Genève is about losing control of poetry; the technique is a voluntary abandoning of control.

Bowering's difficulty is first suggested through the number of unanswered questions, but the problem becomes more explicit as the poem progresses. By the fourteenth poem, the poet has become a god-like figure who destroys what he makes in order to remake:

> He does it himself, acting at times
> like a poet, to kill
> what he makes
> in order to make
> . . . . . .

The falling bricks
catch that light
& scatter it
into new configurations[59]

This distressing definition occurs at the end of the poem where the absolute control of the creation or re-creation is replaced by a kind of disinterest which leaves much of the creation to chance. Out of destruction comes a design which is "half random, but toucht / with art."[60] Bowering admits, then, that his control is not absolute, that he is willing to play a minor role in the creation of his volume. This willingness is reiterated in poem sixteen where he says he "will tell what they [the pictures] look like";[61] in poem twenty-one where he asks "What can I make of her [Queen of Clubs]? / . . . . / Whatever make of them all,"[62] and in poem twenty-two where he confesses "The symbols are difficult to / assimilate."[63] When the reader turns to the twenty-third poem, he finds not clarification, but deliberate confusion; Bowering admits he dissembles:

(Come on, George, you know the real name, see,
you dissemble already--)[64]

Here Bowering seems to feel that such dissembling can somehow be justified because his friend Roy did the same thing.

(That is the fear made subtle, George,
ask Roy,
who dissembld even in
the midst of his vision, even
in his poem--)[65]

This excuse, which occurs after Bowering asks, "How / can I even name his awe, this mere / hairy king?"[66] suggests that, if the task becomes too difficult, it is right to dissemble.

In poem thirty, Bowering does not even know where he stands.

Who's to judge? Who's to
sound the horn? Does this stranger
know the key I've always playd in?
. . . . . .
No one knew which way I was looking.

& now, not even I.[67]

Because he does not know where he stands, he must, as he confesses in poem thirty-one, ". . . ask questions now, always / [ask] questions."[68] He finds that his role has changed; now, he says "I am the audience."[69] He cannot, however, totally abandon his role as poet. He finds he still searches for relevances, and so, he accuses himself of ". . . looking / too hard, looking for it,"[70] but always, he is at a loss:

I'll never know what to say about him,
try desperately as I may
toward that end[71]

His method defeats him. His refusal to use the meanings which the cards contain, his determination to keep the cards one-dimensional, forces him to say of the QUEEN OF SWORDS:

The short German skirt
is decoration,
another symbol.
She is the symbol
woman.

I dont need symbols.[72]

Without the symbols, without using the cards' meanings to help him identify and work through whatever issue plagues him, all he can ask when he confronts JUSTICE is

What have I opend
to her eyes
these thirty-seven pictures?[73]

No answer is or can be given.

Bowering's method prevents synthesis because he finds that once he ignores the cards' symbolism, he has no way to answer the many questions he raises both about the pictures and about himself. Genève's potential as an extended form is tied to Bowering's decision to use the pictures on the Tarot cards. That is, the cards' symbols could help bridge the gap between personal exploration of fears and desires and the public expression of those fears and desires, but for the potential to be realized Bowering must make explicit the relationship between the single identity offered in each poem and the single identity offered by the volume as a whole which he implies through his design. Yvor Winters states that the "creation of a form is nothing more or less than the act of evaluating and shaping (that is, controlling) a given experience."[74] Although Bowering may, as Davey suggests, accomplish this feat in certain individual poems, his numerous unanswered questions, combined with a deliberate ignoring of symbolic meaning and a lack of definition, prevent evaluation, prevent shaping, and ultimately prevent control. Bowering's failure to create a satisfactory form is related to his use of phenomenological techniques which force him to be more concerned with an exploration of himself than with how his personal searches make him part of a larger community which shares similar fears and desires. His narrative excludes the reader because his refusal to consider the potential relationship between cards prohibits a clear connection between poems and excludes definition of what he attempts to work through. Bowering falls into a trap; he becomes, as Winters says, one of the "many writers [who] have sought to seize the fluidity of experience by breaking down the limits of form, but . . . in doing so, [he defeats his] own ends."[75] In Genève, Bowering's desire to capture the fluidity of his

personal thoughts about and reactions to the Tarot leads to his hope that the pictures themselves will strengthen the narrative by providing the necessary links between poems. But, his refusal to evaluate and to shape his responses through defining his connection to the wealth of meaning to which the Tarot cards provide access limits Genève to a one dimensional personal exploration which excludes the reader and denies Bowering's consideration of the mysteries contained within the cards. Here, the Tarot is not a key to the collective unconscious, and, therefore, Bowering is unable to transform his exploration from a personal confrontation of fears and desires to a communal confrontation of those same fears and desires.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

My examination of Jay Macpherson's The Boatman, Gwendolyn MacEwen's The Armies of the Moon, Margaret Atwood's The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Michael Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, and George Bowering's Genève reveals the poets' use of particular techniques that encourage readers to understand each volume as a single extended form. At the simplest level, the title of the book indicates something of the process, topic, or definition which individual poems jointly explore, but in each case the ordering of the poems is informed by principles that go well beyond simple sequence or progression on a common theme. As a series of poems, each more or less complete in itself, the book offers a variety of perspectives, but these in turn are controlled or at least contained within the poet's use of what I have defined, in my first chapter, as a comprehensive myth. When successful, this comprehensive myth serves the extended form as a structural device in a number of ways, largely ways which relate otherwise disparate elements. If the poet understands the potential of the techniques and themes of comprehensive myth, he or she can manipulate them variously to fuse or to bring into conflict, to distinguish or to harmonize such disparate materials as the private and the public, instinct and history, fact and fantasy, the long past and the contemporary. My argument has been that an appreciation of the poet's particular use--or failure to use--comprehensive myth is essential to a proper understanding and evaluation

of his work as an extended form.

Of the five examples cited, two, Jay Macpherson's The Boatman and George Bowering's Genève, are only limited successes. In The Boatman, Macpherson's use of myth as historical artifact prevents the multiple perspectives offered by individual poems from clearly interacting with each other, which means that the book lacks a sense of controlling perspective and containment. In Genève, Bowering's conscious denial of the structure and myth inherent in the Tarot cards leads to a loss of meaningful interaction between or among individual poems. Bowering's deliberate refusal to make use of mythical materials already present prevents the combination of personal with historical or more universal problems, which means that Genève's potential as an extended form is not realized.

Three works, however, are successful. In The Armies of the Moon, Gwendolyn MacEwen's comprehensive myth works to integrate various levels of human perception and consciousness. MacEwen employs all the characteristics which ensure mythic revelation; she concentrates on the recreation of personal experience by incorporating mythical analogues. A sense of myth enacted comes from the balance between her conscious arrangement of poems in a logical and linear order which moves to a specific conclusion and her exploration of the hierarchical relationships within that linear structure. Margaret Atwood, in The Journals of Susanna Moodie, creates a "new" myth by adopting existing mythic characteristics which ensure revelation and by combining these characteristics with the image of Susanna Moodie which she discerned in her documents. Atwood transforms Susanna Moodie from historical personage to the central character in her myth, and, in order to replicate

mythic plots and themes, she dramatizes Moodie's actions by making them the same as Moodie's mythic counterparts Persephone, and the Triple Goddess, Diana, Venus, Hecate. Finally, in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Michael Ondaatje, through providing Billy with a private self which reveals that the Kid seeks self expression through artistic means, adds a new dimension to the legend of Billy the Kid. This new dimension complements rather than supplants the image of Billy which legend bestows upon him while simultaneously transforming Billy from legendary hero to representative artist-outsider. To help make the new image of the Kid complete, Ondaatje combines personal and historical conflicts which tend to move his own personal preoccupations to the status of public themes.

One obvious difference between the successful extended forms and those volumes of limited success is the strength of the narrative. When the poet's sense of comprehensive myth is successful, that is, when the comprehensive myth functions as a structural principle, the strength of the narrative is directly proportional to the strength of the bonds between poems. For example, in The Boatman, Macpherson offers no consistent, identifiable speaker who might function as a directing guide; thus, the book's success as an extended form is limited even though the poems individually provide multiple perspectives which could be related. Bowering, on the other hand, does offer himself as a consistent, identifiable speaker, but his failure to consider the interaction of the cards means that the connections between poems are poor even though his design suggests that the book has formal properties which permit it to be read as a single poem. Bowering leaves the reader puzzling even over the meaning of the title of the book and his purpose for choosing the Tarot cards in the first place.

In contrast to these volumes with weak narratives, Armies, The Journals, and The Collected Works are characterized by strong narratives which help MacEwen, Atwood, and Ondaatje make their extended statements. In Armies, MacEwen provides a speaker who, in two framing poems, describes a confrontation between scientific accomplishments and the imagination in terms applicable to the whole of modern civilization; this same speaker offers the record of a personal journey between these framing poems. The reader sees and experiences the process as this speaker undergoes it. The recording of the process, which is aided by mythic allusions and the exploration of the speaker's relationship to imaginative creations and scientific achievements, leads to a kinetic myth which is held together and shaped by the speaker. In The Journals, Atwood adopts a persona, Susanna Moodie, who directly and gradually reveals her double vision. The poems are presented chronologically and the reader thus gains both a sense of Moodie's gradual acknowledgement and acceptance of her double vision and her transformation into the identities of her counterparts in Classical mythology. Atwood simultaneously speaks through and for Moodie and in this way the narrative is shaped and controlled. Ondaatje, in The Collected Works, creates two narrative strands, one of which sustains the image of Billy the Kid which the public accepts and expects, and one of which provides access to Billy's private self. These strands are entwined and combined to create a fragmented time scheme, but because these are played against the traditional chronology of Billy's life, the sense of a strong narrative line is retained.

There also emerged from the study an interesting correlation between the success of the volume as an extended form and the poet's use of documents. In The Boatman, for example, Macpherson's use of myth as

artifact and her reliance on the allusiveness of her mythological symbols not only prevented the development of a strong narrative line, but also required that her documents include almost the whole of world literature, and this "document" is simply too bulky to provide the shape and control she desired. The general failure of Macpherson's book is overcome in Part V where she uses particular biblical images and stories to define her goals; unfortunately, the success of this section cannot surmount the problems caused by using allusive mythical symbols to create and sustain connections between poems. In Genève, Bowering's decision to use the Tarot pack provided him with a resource which, if he had acknowledged the potential power of his document, would have aided in his creation of a strong narrative and provided him with multiple perspectives which would have given direction to and offered keys for his exploration of personal fears and desires.

Of the three successful attempts to create an extended form, MacEwen is the only poet who does not use a specific document for most of her book. Rather, she relies on the methods of myth and in doing so can combine effectively such disparate items as figures from Greek mythology and the scientific achievement of men walking on the moon. However, there is evidence that MacEwen uses a document for the poem entitled "The Nine Arcana of the Kings"; here, her own novel King of Egypt, King of Dreams, which has its source in the history of ancient Egypt, provides the details for the story of the prince and his sister-wife. In The Journals, Atwood discovers her topic in her two major sources, Roughing It in the Bush and Life in the Clearings by Susanna Moodie. The material in these documents generates her poems, and she reproduces much from her sources. Atwood finds in history what she believes is the model which

defines the state of the Canadian psyche. In The Collected Works, Ondaatje, like Atwood, makes extensive use of documents. His interest in Billy the Kid was piqued by what books about the Kid ignored, as well as what they accomplished. Unlike Atwood who uses her material exclusively to generate poems which help her create her new image of Mrs Moodie, Ondaatje uses his material in large part to help him perpetuate the public image of Billy which legend creates. He also uses documents on photography which allow him to suggest the difficulty of capturing and shaping an adequate image of the Kid.

The desire of English Canadian poets to make an extended statement, to create a long poem is not confined to the five poets and the five examples given. In fact, MacEwen, Atwood, Ondaatje and Bowering have adopted this format for other volumes of their work, and one might profitably apply the terms of my analysis of extended forms to works by other Canadian poets like bp Nichol's The Martyrology or Daphne Marlatt's Frames. These five examples do point to the poet's awareness that any attempt to make an extended statement requires much more than the lyric expression of his personal perception and emotion. They also suggest that, given the poet's willingness to use the potential power of what this study has tried to define as comprehensive myth, the availability of documents and the inventiveness of our poets in using them will continue to make, as it has already made, the extended form a prominent feature of Canadian poetry.

NOTES

Chapter I: Introduction

[1]I am thinking here, for example, of Freud's interpretation of Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus. Freud bases his theory on the "truth" contained in the story of Oedipus, but the play is Sophocles' interpretation of the myth, not the original myth itself.

[2]Lillian Feder, Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. vii.

[3]Feder, p. vii.

[4]Feder, p. viii.

[5]Feder, p. 11.

[6]Feder, p. 9.

[7]Feder, p. 11.

[8]Feder, p. 33.

[9]Feder, p. 28.

[10]Feder, p. 10.

[11]Feder, p. 10.

[12]Feder, p. 416.

[13]Feder, p. 344.

[14]Feder, p. 416.

[15]Feder, p. 11.

[16]Bronislaw Malinowski, "Myth in Primitive Psychology," in Magic, Science, and Religion and Other Essays (Boston: n.p., 1948), pp. 78-79.

[17]Feder, p. 7.

[18]Feder, p. 30.

[19]Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 22.

[20]Lévi-Strauss, p. 95.

[21]Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return, trans. Willard K. Trask (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 18.

[22]Philip Rahv, The Myth and the Powerhouse (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1966), pp. 11-12.

[23]Rahv, p. 15.

[24]Rahv, p. 6.

[25]Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, trans. Joan Riviere (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1969), p. 27.

[26]Freud, p. 209.

[27]Freud, p. 174.

[28]Here, the word "private" reflects the tendency of explorations into the unconscious to be introspective; "public" refers to the manner in which an individual strives to define himself as part of a larger social structure. The tension between private and public is greater in modern than primitive society because, as Eliade suggests, modern man is no longer satisfied with subordinating his sense of self to his sense of community.

Chapter II: Jay Macpherson's "The Boatman"

[1]Northrop Frye, rev. of The Boatman, by Jay Macpherson, University of Toronto Quarterly, 27 (July 1958), 434.

[2]Munro Beattie, "Poetry: 1950-1960," in Literary History of Canadian Literature in English, general ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 788.

[3]In a letter to Rev. Trusler in 1799, Blake states, "I feel that Man may be happy in This World. And I know that This World Is a World of Imagination and Vision . . . . But to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself. As a man is, So he Sees. As the Eye is formed, such are its Powers." William Blake, "Letter to the Revd. Dr. Trusler, August 23, 1799," in William Blake, ed. with an intro. by J. Bronowski (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 220-221.

[4]Frye, pp. 436-437.

[5]Frye, p. 437.

[6]Frye, p. 438.

[7]Frye, p. 438.

[8]The fact that certain lyrics appear in italics also is ignored by critics. Surely, the very fact that some poems are written in different type indicates the poet's desire to have these poems stand out slightly from the other poems. In these lyrics, the poet gives the reader directions which indicate the progression of the theme, or define something of the process the poet undergoes.

[9]Jay Macpherson, "No Man's Nightingale," in The Boatman (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957), n. pag. Please note that in order to keep the form of my thesis consistent, I have not italicized the poem titles, even though this edition does. All further references to poems by Jay Macpherson are from this collection.

[10]In the myth, Procne, the older sister of Philomela was married to King Tereus of Thrace. After five years of marriage, Tereus agreed to fetch Philomela so that she might visit her sister. But, on the way to Thrace, Tereus conceived a passion for Philomela and rather than taking her to see her sister, he landed on a rocky coast, dragged her into the forest, and kept her captive in a tower. He also cut out her tongue. Philomela grieved for one year, and then wove her story into a tapestry which a servant then took to Procne who read of her sister's grief and at once went to the forest and rescued Philomela. Together, they killed and cut up Procne's son. The meat was cooked and the dish placed before Tereus, who, when he understood what had happened, grabbed his sword and pursued the sisters. "To prevent more bloodshed the gods at once transformed all three of them: Tereus to a hoopoe wearing a crest of feathers and Procne to a chattering home-dwelling swallow, while Philomela, her voice at last restored, became the nightingale who tells her sorrows all night to the silent woods." Jay Macpherson, Four Ages of Man: The Classical Myths (Toronto: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 47 and 49.

The myth implies that the nightingale's plight is directly connected to man; indeed the role of the nightingale is to tell of her sorrows which were caused by a mortal, fallen man. By saying that as

nightingale she belongs to no man, Macpherson effectively denies the singing of sorrows caused by man, and thereby shifts her allegiance to the guiding Angel.

[11]In both "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" and The Waste Land (II "A Game of Chess"), Eliot uses the nightingale to suggest man's moral degeneration, and, therefore, his use reflects the original circumstances of the myth.

[12]Macpherson, "No Man's Nightingale," n. pag. This image of a mortal being fed by an Angel's finger is reminiscent of Blake's copper etchings.

[13]Macpherson, "No Man's Nightingale," n. pag.

[14]I have equated spring with renewal because spring is the beginning of new life, or renewal, in the natural cycle.

[15]Macpherson, "No Man's Nightingale," n. pag.

[16]Macpherson, "Ordinary People in the Last Days," p. 4.

[17]When the scribes and Pharisees asked Christ for a sign, he answered,

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Matthew 12.39-41.

[18]Macpherson makes her examples all inclusive by playing upon Eliot's line "Let us go then, you and I". T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in Collected Poems 1909-1962 (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), p. 13.

[19]Macpherson, "Poor Child," p. 5.

[20]Macpherson, "In Time of Pestilence," p. 8.

[21]According to this myth, Apollo promised Sibylla whatever she might ask. She took up a handful of dust from the ground and asked to live as many years as there were grains in her hands, but she forgot to ask for perpetual youth. Apollo offered her this as well if she would grant him her love, and when she refused, he swore that what she had

desired should be her punishment. Her destiny was to live for a thousand years in old age and weakness. At last, she shrank to a pitiful heap of skin and bone, and was hung in a bottle from the temple roof. Nothing but her voice was left to her by the Fates. Children playing near the shrine would call out, "Sybil, what do you want?" and from the bottle a faint chirping voice would answer, "I want to die." Her oracles, in the days when she still gave them, were confused answers written on leaves and tossed up into the wind that swirled about her cave.

[22]Macpherson, "Sibylla," p. 21.

[23]Macpherson, "The Rymer," p. 23.

[24]Macpherson, "The Rymer," p. 23.

[25]Macpherson, "Mary of Egypt," p. 24.

[26]Macpherson, untitled, p. 20.

[27]Macpherson, untitled, p. 20.

[28]Macpherson, untitled, p. 30.

[29]Macpherson, untitled, p. 30. Macpherson's combination of Cain and Babel, especially when the reader expects the phrase to read "Raises both Cain and Abel," forces the reader to take note of the allusions, and thus to remember the story of Cain murdering his brother, and the story of the Tower of Babel where confusion developed after the people working on the tower discovered they all spoke different languages.

[30]Frye, p. 434.

[31]Macpherson, "The Boatman," p. 48.

[32]Macpherson, "The Boatman," p. 48.

[33]Macpherson, "The Boatman," p. 48.

[34]Macpherson, "Ark Parting," p. 52.

[35]Macpherson, "The Island," p. 53.

[36]Macpherson, "The Inward Angel," p. 54.

[37]Macpherson, "Leviathan," p. 55.

[38]Macpherson, "The Anagogic Man," p. 56.

[39]Macpherson, "The Anagogic Man," p. 56.

Chapter III: Gwendolyn MacEwen's "The Armies of the Moon"

[1]Frank Davey, "Gwendolyn MacEwen: The Secret of Alchemy," in Open Letter, 2nd ser., 4 (Spring 1972), 5.

[2]Ellen D. Warwick, "To Seek a Single Symmetry," in Canadian Literature, No. 71 (Winter 1976), p. 32.

[3]Gwendolyn MacEwen, "Introduction," in A Breakfast for Barbarians (Toronto; The Ryerson Press, 1966), n. pag.

[4]Davey, p. 12.

[5]This speaker can be identified as the poet, but because of the way MacEwen blurs the boundaries between the internal and the external, there is an unfixed relationship between the poet, the speaker, and the characters who appear in specific poems. This variable relationship allows MacEwen to use different characters both as devices and as symbols. As devices these characters help MacEwen externalize the internal; as symbols they help her categorize her experience once that experience is externalized. The speaker's response to these characters therefore varies and her understanding is frequently limited. In order to distinguish MacEwen the poet who controls and creates Armies from the speaker, I prefer not to refer to the speaker as MacEwen.

[6]The moon is a complex and important image in Armies. In mythology the moon is associated with Hermes in Greece and with Thoth in Egypt. Both characters are guides, teachers, and conductors of souls to the afterworld. Both are simultaneously protective and dangerous, and both unite the ambiguities of the unconscious. In Egypt, Thoth is associated with time; he is the inventor of mathematics, astronomy, and engineering. Thoth is Lord of Magic, and he taught Osiris the arts of civilization. He is Master of the Words of God, or of the characters of writing which he was said to have invented. In Greece, Hermes was the god of prudence and cunning, and of commerce. He was also god of sleep and dreams as well as of crops and mining. Hermes invented many things, including numbers, the alphabet, the science of astronomy, the art of fighting, and weights and measures.

The interesting feature of both Hermes and Thoth is that they are imaginary; that is, they are created by man in order to explain the existence of many worldly phenomena. Because they are moon gods, the

moon represents all that the gods represent, and, therefore, the moon reflects the union of the imaginary and the real.

However, the moon is also a real planet and scientific accomplishments have succeeded in dispelling much of the mystery which used to surround it. The moon therefore embodies both the imaginary and the real, and is, as a consequence, an ideal battleground.

[7]The epigraph is from Laurens vander Post's The Seed and the Sower, and describes the recognition of the similarity between a war inside and a war outside:

> *It was then that I first realized that the war I was fighting was in me long before it was in the world without. I realized that I was fighting it in a*--ach! was heisst es--*a secondary dimension of reality.*

[8]Gwendolyn MacEwen, "The Armies of the Moon," in The Armies of the Moon (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), p. 1; hereafter this poem will be cited "Armies". All further references to poems by Gwen MacEwen are from this collection.

[9]MacEwen, "Armies," p. 1.

[10]MacEwen, "Armies," p. 1.

[11]MacEwen, "Armies," p. 1.

[12]MacEwen, "Armies," p. 1.

[13]MacEwen, "Armies," p. 1.

[14]MacEwen, "Apollo Twelve," p. 75.

[15]MacEwen, "Apollo Twelve," p. 75.

[16]MacEwen, "Apollo Twelve," p. 75.

[17]MacEwen, "Apollo Twelve," p. 75.

[18]Stan Dragland, rev. of The Armies of the Moon, by Gwendolyn MacEwen, Quarry, XXI:4 (Autumn 1972), 57.

[19]Davey, p. 19.

[20]Margaret Atwood, "MacEwen's Muse," Canadian Literature, 45 (Summer 1970), 24.

[21]Atwood, p. 28.

[22]MacEwen, "Letters of Water," p. 44.

[23]MacEwen, "Letters of Water," p. 44.

[24]MacEwen, "The Child Dancing," p. 33.

[25]MacEwen, "The Film," p. 43.

[26]MacEwen, "Credo," p. 59.

[27]MacEwen, "The Hour of the Singer," p. 60.

[28]Atwood, p. 31.

[29]MacEwen, "I Have Mislaid Something," p. 7.

[30]MacEwen, "I Have Mislaid Something," p. 7.

[31]MacEwen, "Memoirs of a Mad Cook," p. 14.

[32]MacEwen, "Memoirs of a Mad Cook," p. 14.

[33]Lilith is a female demon of Jewish folklore, equivalent to the English vampire. The personality and name (night monster) are derived from a Babylonian-Assyrian demon lilit or liku. Lilith was believed to have a special power for evil over children. In rabbinical literature, Lilith becomes the first wife of Adam, but flies away from him and becomes a demon.
"Lilith," Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed.

[34]MacEwen, "Lilith," p. 15.

[35]MacEwen, "Lilith," p. 15.

[36]MacEwen, "Lilith," p. 15.

[37]Salome is identified with the dancer who asked Herod Antipas for John the Baptist's head. Mark 6.16-28.

[38]MacEwen, "Lilith," p. 15.

[39]MacEwen, "Lilith," p. 15. At a time of acute crisis when the Nika insurrection broke out in 532, Theodora's courage and firmness in refusing to fly when the rebels were attacking the palace was a contributing factor in saving her husband's crown. In the religious controversy which divided the empire, Theodora sided with the Monophysites (persons who teach that Jesus Christ had only one nature, rather than two natures, divine and human) and strongly supported the heretics of Egypt and Syria. After her marriage she lived a strictly moral life, and as empress she instituted homes for prostitutes.
"Theodora," Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed.

[40]MacEwen, "The Holy Burlesque," p. 17.

[41]MacEwen, "The Holy Burlesque," p. 17.

[42]MacEwen, "Phobos," p. 24.

[43]MacEwen, "Phobos," p. 24.

[44]MacEwen, "Meditations of a Seamstress (1)," p. 8.

[45]MacEwen, "Dining at the Savarin," p. 13.

[46]MacEwen, "The Vacuum Cleaner Dream," p. 18.

[47]MacEwen, "Note from a Figure at Pompeii," p. 25.

[48]MacEwen, "Note from a Figure at Pompeii," p. 25.

[49]MacEwen, "Two Aspects of the Moon," p. 29; hereafter this poem will be cited "TAM".

[50]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 29.

[51]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 29.

[52]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 29.

[53]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 29.

[54]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 29.

[55]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 30.

[56]MacEwen, "TAM," p. 30.

[57]MacEwen, "The Child Dancing," p. 33.

[58]MacEwen, "The Child Dancing," p. 33.

[59]MacEwen, "The Child Dancing," p. 33.

[60]MacEwen, "The Other Underground," p. 34; hereafter this poem will be cited "OU".

[61]MacEwen, "OU," p. 34.

[62]MacEwen, "OU," p. 34.

[63]MacEwen, "OU," p. 34.

[64]MacEwen, "OU," p. 35.

[65]MacEwen, "OU," p. 35.

[66]MacEwen, "A Dance at the Mental Hospital," p. 37.

[67]MacEwen, "Letters of Water," p. 44.

[68]MacEwen, "A Letter to Charos," p. 45.

[69]MacEwen, "A Letter to Charos," p. 45.

[70]MacEwen, "The Telescope Turned Inward," p. 47.

[71]MacEwen, "The Telescope Turned Inward," p. 47.

[72]MacEwen, "The Golden Hunger," p. 51; hereafter this poem will be cited "Hunger".

[73]MacEwen, "Hunger," p. 51.

[74]MacEwen, "Hunger," p. 51.

[75]MacEwen, "Hunger," p. 51.

[76]MacEwen, "Hunger," p. 51.

[77]MacEwen, "House of Mercury," p. 52.

[78]MacEwen, "House of Mercury," p. 52.

[79]MacEwen, "Jewellery," p. 53.

[80]MacEwen, "The Sign," p. 54.

[81]MacEwen, "The Real Name of the Sea," p. 58.

[82]MacEwen, "Credo," p. 59.

[83]MacEwen, "Written After Coming Out of a Deep Sleep," p. 62; hereafter this poem will be cited "Deep Sleep".

[84]MacEwen, "Deep Sleep," p. 62.

[85]MacEwen, "Deep Sleep," p. 62.

[86]MacEwen, "Deep Sleep," p. 62.

[87]In this 1966 collection, MacEwen includes the first three arcana. No revisions have been made to the original three poems.

[88]MacEwen, "Arcanum One: The Prince," p. 64.

[89]MacEwen, "Arcanum Three: The Death of the Prince," p. 66.

[90]MacEwen, "Arcanum Four: The Embalming," p. 67.

[91]MacEwen, "Arcanum Six: The Centuries," p. 69.

[92]MacEwen, "Arcanum Six: The Centuries," p. 69.

[93]MacEwen, "Arcanum Six: The Centuries," p. 69.

[94]MacEwen, "Arcanum Seven: The Return," p. 70.

[95]MacEwen, "Arcanum Two: The Conspirator," p. 65.

[96]MacEwen, "Arcanum Eight: The Story," p. 71.

[97]MacEwen, "The Hour of the Singer," p. 60.

[98]MacEwen, "Arcanum Nine: The Ring," p. 72.

[99]Dragland, p. 61.

[100]MacEwen, "Arcanum Nine: The Ring," p. 72.

Chapter IV: Margaret Atwood's "The Journals of Susanna Moodie"

[1]George Woodcock, "Playing with Freezing Fire," Canadian Literature, 70 (Autumn 1976), 84.

[2]John Wilson Foster, "The Poetry of Margaret Atwood," Canadian Literature, 74 (Autumn 1977), 9.

[3]Sherrill Grace, Violent Duality: A Study of Margaret Atwood, ed. Ken Norris (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1980), p. 33.

[4]Atwood, "Afterword," in The Journals of Susanna Moodie (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 63.

[5]Robert L. McDougall, "Introduction" in Life in the Clearings by Susanna Moodie (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), p. viii.

[6]Susanna Moodie, "Introduction," in Life in the Clearings (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), p. xxxiii.

[7]McDougall, p. x.

[8]Atwood, "First Neighbours," in The Journals of Susanna Moodie (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 14. All further references to Atwood poems are from this edition.

[9]Atwood, "First Neighbours," p. 14.

[10]Atwood, "First Neighbours," p. 14.

[11]Atwood, "The Planters," p. 16.

[12]Susanna Moodie, "Introduction to Third Edition," in Roughing It in the Bush (Toronto: Bell and Cockburn, 1913), p. xviii.

[13]Atwood, "Paths and Thingscape," p. 20.

[14]Atwood, "Paths and Thingscape," p. 20.

[15]Atwood, "Paths and Thingscape," p. 21.

[16]Susanna Moodie, Roughing It in the Bush, p. 279.

[17]Atwood, "The Two Fires," p. 22.

[18]Atwood, "The Two Fires," p. 22.

[19]Susanna Moodie, Roughing It in the Bush, p. 544.

[20]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 24.

[21]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 31.

[22]Susanna Moodie, Life in the Clearings (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), p. 27.

[23]Atwood, "The Double Voice," p. 42.

[24]Atwood, "The Double Voice," p. 42.

[25]Atwood, "The Double Voice," p. 42.

[26]Atwood, "Dream 1: The Bush Garden," p. 34.

[27]Atwood, "Dream 1: The Bush Garden," p. 34.

[28]Susanna Moodie, Roughing It in the Bush, p. 225.

[29]Atwood, "Later in Belleville: Career," p. 47.

[30]Atwood, "Later in Belleville: Career," p. 47.

[31]Atwood, "Afterword," in The Journals, p. 63.

[32]Atwood, "Afterword," in The Journals, p. 62.

[33]Foster, p. 9.

[34]Dorothy Livesay, "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre," in Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 267.

[35]Atwood, "Afterword," in The Journals, p. 62.

[36]Atwood, "Afterword," in The Journals, p. 62.

[37]Atwood, "Afterword," in The Journals, p. 62.

[38]Atwood, Untitled, n. pag.

[39]In his essay "The Journals of Susanna Moodie: a self-portrait of Margaret Atwood" (white pelican 2.2 (Spring 1972), pp. 32-36), Sid Stephen's emphasis on the importance of the prefacing poem is correct but there is little support for his claim that the poem does not form an integral part of the collection or for his claim that "the resulting poems may be said to represent a kind of transformation of the poet's own picture of herself, and thus to be a kind of 'self-portrait' of Margaret Atwood."

[40]In Violent Duality, Sherrill Grace changes the triple goddess to Diana, Luna, Hecate. Atwood does not make such a suggestion in Survival, or elsewhere, and, therefore, I concluded that Grace makes this change in order to make her argument stronger. I feel, however, that she should indicate she has made such a change. Further, her suggestion that in the second journal Moodie is governed by the moon is not supported by the text, any more than the suggestion that Moodie becomes associated with Venus. In fact, my suggestion that Atwood intentionally has Moodie skip her association with Venus, follows Atwood's suggestion that in Canadian literature, the identification of females with Nature is perhaps responsible for the lack of Venuses. See Atwood's Survival, pp. 199-208.

[41]Margaret Atwood, Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 199.

[42]Atwood, Survival, p. 199.

[43]Atwood, "Disembarking at Quebec," p. 11.

[44]Atwood, "Disembarking at Quebec," p. 11.

[45]Atwood, "Disembarking at Quebec," p. 11.

[46]Atwood, "Disembarking at Quebec," p. 11.

[47]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 12.

[48]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 12.

[49]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 12.

[50]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 13.

[51]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 13.

[52]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 13.

[53]Foster, p. 13.

[54]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 13.

[55]Atwood, "Further Arrivals," p. 13.

[56]Atwood, "First Neighbours," p. 14.

[57]Sid Stephen, "The Journals of Susanna Moodie: a self-portrait of Margaret Atwood," white pelican 2.2 (Spring 1972), p. 32.

[58]Atwood, "First Neighbours," p. 14.

[59]Atwood, "First Neighbours," p. 14.

[60]Atwood, "First Neighbours," p. 15.

[61]Atwood, "The Planters," p. 17.

[62]Atwood, "The Planters," p. 17.

[63]Atwood, "Paths and Thingscape," p. 21.

[64]Atwood, "Paths and Thingscape," p. 20.

[65]Atwood, "Paths and Thingscape," p. 21.

[66]Atwood, "The Two Fires," p. 23.

[67]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 24.

[68]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 25.

[69]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 25.

[70]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 25.

[71]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 25.

[72]In Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces (2nd edition, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) Campbell defines the power of the Lady of the House of Sleep: ". . . she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection; the soul's assurance that, at the conclusion of its exile in a world of organized inadequacies, the bliss that once was known will be known again. . . ." (p. 111).

In The Golden Bough (Abridged Edition, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1963) Frazer makes a more general statement of what the soul can accomplish while the body sleeps: "The soul of the sleeper is supposed to wander away from his body and actually to visit the places, to see the persons, and to perform the acts of which he dreams" (p. 239).

[73]Atwood, "Looking in a Mirror," p. 25.

[74]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 26.

[75]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 26.

[76]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 26.

[77]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 26.

[78]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 27.

[79]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 27.

[80]Atwood, "Departure from the Bush," p. 27.

[81]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 30.

[82]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 31.

[83]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 31.

[84]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 31.

[85]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 31.

[86]Atwood, "Death of a Young Son by Drowning," p. 31.

[87]Atwood, "The Immigrants," p. 32.

[88]Atwood, "The Immigrants," p. 33.

[89]Atwood, "The Immigrants," p. 33.

[90]Atwood, "The Immigrants," p. 33.

[91]Atwood, "Dream 1: The Bush Garden," p. 34.

[92]Atwood, "Dream 1: The Bush Garden," p. 34.

[93]Atwood, "Dream 1: The Bush Garden," p. 34.

[94]Atwood, "Dream 1: The Bush Garden," p. 34.

[95]In The Golden Bough, Frazer explains the connection between Dionysiac rites and the land: "Like other gods of vegetation Dionysus was believed to have died a violent death, but to have been brought to life again; and his sufferings, death, and resurrection were enacted in his sacred rites" (p. 511).

"On the whole we may perhaps conclude that both as a goat and as a bull Dionysus was essentially a god of vegetation. . . . The animal was torn into fragments . . . in order that the worshippers might each secure a portion of the life-giving and fertilising influence of the god. The flesh was eaten raw as a sacrament, and we may conjecture that some of it was taken home to be buried in the fields, or otherwise employed so as to convey to the fruits of the earth the quickening influence of the god of vegetation" (p. 615).

[96]Atwood, "1837 War in Retrospect," p. 35.

[97]Atwood, "1837 War in Retrospect," p. 35.

[98]Atwood, "1837 War in Retrospect," p. 35.

[99]Atwood, "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," p. 36.

[100]Atwood, "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," p. 36.

[101]Atwood, "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," p. 36.

[102]Atwood, "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," p. 36.

[103]Atwood, "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," p. 36.

[104]Atwood, "Dream 2: Brian the Still-Hunter," p. 36.

[105]Atwood, "Charivari," p. 37.

[106]Atwood, "Charivari," p. 37.

[107]Atwood, "Charivari," p. 37.

[108]Atwood, "Charivari," p. 37.

[109]Atwood, "Dream 3: Night Bear Which Frightened Cattle," p. 38.

[110]Atwood, "Dream 3: Night Bear Which Frightened Cattle," p. 38.

[111]Atwood, "Dream 3: Night Bear Which Frightened Cattle," pp. 38-39.

[112]Atwood, "The Deaths of the Other Children," p. 41.

[113]Atwood, "The Deaths of the Other Children," p. 41.

[114]Atwood, "The Deaths of the Other Children," p. 41.

[115]Atwood, "The Deaths of the Other Children," p. 41.

[116]Atwood, "The Deaths of the Other Children," p. 41.

[117]Atwood, "The Double Voice," p. 42.

[118]Atwood, "The Double Voice," p. 42.

[119]Atwood, "The Double Voice," p. 42.

[120]Atwood, "Later in Belleville: Career," p. 47.

[121]Atwood, "Later in Belleville: Career," p. 47.

[122]Atwood, "Later in Belleville: Career," p. 47.

[123]Atwood, "Daguerrotype Taken in Old Age," p. 48.

[124]Atwood, "Daguerrotype Taken in Old Age," p. 48.

[125]Atwood, "Daguerrotype Taken in Old Age," p. 48.

[126]Atwood, "Wish: Metamorphosis to Heraldic Emblem," p. 49.

[127]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 50.

[128]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 50.

[129]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 50.

[130]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 50.

[131]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 51.

[132]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 51.

[133]Atwood, "Visit to Toronto, With Companions," p. 50.

[134]Atwood, "Solipsism While Dying," p. 52.

[135]Atwood, "Solipsism While Dying," p. 52.

[136]Atwood, "Solipsism While Dying," p. 52.

[137]Atwood, "Solipsism While Dying," p. 52.

[138]Atwood, "Solipsism While Dying," p. 52.

[139]Atwood, "Solipsism While Dying," p. 53.

[140]Atwood, "Thoughts from Underground," p. 54.

[141]Atwood, "Thoughts from Underground," p. 54.

[142]Atwood, "Thoughts from Underground," p. 55.

[143]Atwood, "Thoughts from Underground," p. 55.

[144]Atwood, "Alternate Thoughts from Underground," p. 57.

[145]Atwood, "Alternate Thoughts from Underground," p. 57.

[146]Atwood, "Resurrection," p. 59.

[147]Atwood, "Resurrection," p. 59.

[148]Atwood, "Resurrection," p. 59.

[149]Atwood, "A Bus along St Clair: December," p. 60.

[150]Atwood, "A Bus along St Clair: December," p. 60.

[151]Atwood, "A Bus along St Clair: December," p. 61.

[152]Atwood, "A Bus along St Clair: December," p. 61.

Chapter V: Michael Ondaatje's "The Collected Works of Billy the Kid"

[1]Stephen Scobie, "Two Authors in Search of a Character: bp Nichol and Michael Ondaatje," in Poets and Critics: Essays from Canadian Literature, ed. George Woodcock (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p. 225.

[2]Ondaatje, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid (Toronto: Anansi, 1970), p. 20.

[3]Ondaatje, p. 20.

[4]Kent Ladd Steckmesser, in The Western Hero in History and Legend (Norman, Oklahoma: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1965), points out that "the event took place on December 18 . . . ," p. 88.

[5]In the Credits at the end of the collection, Ondaatje states, "The death of Tunstall, the reminiscences by Paulita Maxwell on Billy, are essentially made up of statements made to Walter Noble Burns in his book The Saga of Billy the Kid published in 1926."

[6]Ondaatje, p. 54.

[7]Ondaatje, p. 29.

[8]Walter Noble Burns, The Saga of Billy the Kid (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), pp. 15-16.

[9]Ondaatje, p. 30.

[10]Ondaatje, p. 52.

[11]Ondaatje, p. 80.

[12]Steckmesser, p. 57.

[13]Ondaatje, p. 10.

[14]Ondaatje, p. 41.

[15]Ondaatje, p. 72.

[16]Ondaatje, p. 85.

[17]Ondaatje, p. 37.

[18]Ondaatje, p. 38.

[19]Ondaatje, p. 27.

[20]Ondaatje, p. 46.

[21]Ondaatje, p. 46.

[22]Ondaatje, p. 64.

[23]Burns, p. 10.

[24]Ondaatje, "Credits," n. pag.

[25]Ondaatje, p. 32.

[26]Ondaatje, p. 33.

[27]Ondaatje, p. 32.

[28]Ondaatje, p. 71.

[29]Ondaatje, p. 42.

[30]Ondaatje, p. 67.

[31]Ondaatje, p. 17.

[32]Ondaatje, p. 18.

[33]Ondaatje, p. 12.

[34]Steckmesser, p. 100.

[35]Ondaatje, p. 28.

[36]Ondaatje, p. 28.

[37]Ondaatje, p. 28.

[38]Ondaatje, p. 43.

[39]Ondaatje, p. 24.

[40]In the "Credits" at the back of the book, Ondaatje acknowledges a source for the comic book, but my point considers the book as consisting only of the poems and prose sections.

[41]Ondaatje, p. 5.

[42]Ondaatje, p. 19.

[43]Burns, pp. 194-195.

[44]Ondaatje, p. 103.

Chapter VI: George Bowering's "Genève"

[1]Frank Davey, "Anything but Reluctant: Canada's Little Magazines," in The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada, eds. Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 223.

[2]Davey, "Anything but Reluctant," p. 226.

[3]Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski, eds., The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 203.

[4]George Bowering, "The Most Remarkable Thing about Tish," in Tish Nos. 1-19, 1961-63, ed. Frank Davey (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975), August 1963, p. 423. (Also reprinted in The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada, pp. 293-294.)

[5]Beverley Mitchell, S.S.A., "The Genealogy of Tish," Open Letter, 2nd ser., 3 (Fall 1972), 32.

[6]In the introduction to Tish Nos. 1-19, 1961-1963, Frank Davey speaks of Robert Duncan's role: "The impulse to create Tish had been sparked by Robert Duncan during three nights of lectures, July 22, 24, and 25, 1961, at the Vancouver home of Warren Tallman. . . . [Tallman's] efforts had brought Duncan to Vancouver to give readings in December 1959 and February, 1961. . . . After the second reading Tallman encouraged various students, including Bowering, Wah, Jamie Reid, David Dawson, Gladys Hindmarch, and myself, to cooperate with him in financing a special lecture visit by Duncan for that July." Frank Davey, "Introduction," in Tish Nos. 1-19, 1961-1963, ed. Frank Davey (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975), p. 7. Robert Duncan was a member of the Black Mountain group, and thus, it was Duncan who introduced the Tish poets to Olson's theories.

[7]Paul Christensen, Charles Olson: Call Him Ishmael (Austen: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 70.

[8]Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," in American Poetic Theory, ed. George Perkins (n.p.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 337.

[9]Olson, p. 338.

[10]Olson, p. 338.

[11]Olson, p. 338.

[12]Olson, pp. 336-337.

[13]Warren Tallman, "Proprioception in Charles Olson's Poetry," Open Letter, 2nd ser., 2 (summer 1975), 8-9.

[14]Fredric Wah, Tish 1, p. 23.

[15]Frank Davey, Tish 1, p. 19.

[16]George Bowering, Tish 2, p. 31.

[17]Warren Tallman, "When a New Music is Heard the Walls of the City Tremble': A Note on Voice Poetry," Tish 3, p. 68.

[18]Jamie Reid, Tish 4, p. 71.

[19]George Bowering, Tish 4, p. 76.

[20]Frank Davey, "Editorial," in Tish 1, p. 13.

[21]David Dawson, "Editorial," in Tish 5, p. 91.

[22]George Bowering, "The Most Remarkable Thing about Tish," in The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada, eds. Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 294.

[23]George Bowering, "The Test of Real is the Language," in Conversations with Canadian Novelists, ed. Donald Cameron (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973), Part Two, p. 4.

[24]Frank Davey, "A Note on Bowering's Genève," Open Letter, 2nd ser., 1 (Winter, 1971-72), 42-43.

[25]Frank Davey, "A Note on Bowering's Genève," pp. 42-43.

[26]George Bowering, Genève (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1971), p. 15. Genève is complicated by the fact that the poems are neither titled nor the pages numbered. I have therefore numbered both the poems and the pages. Further references are taken from this volume.

[27]Bowering, p. 7.

[28]Bowering, p. 16.

[29]Bowering, p. 30.

[30]Bowering, p. 34.

[31]Bowering, p. 36.

[32]I discussed Genève with Bowering on February 12, 1980; he insisted that although he became aware, about five cards from the end, that the Death card had not yet appeared, he did not "arrange" for the card to appear at the end. Mathematically, of course, the chances of the Death card coming at the end are one in thirty-eight. But, in light of the fact that this card traditionally means not physical death, "but is instead the liberator, whose keen blade releases consciousness from its old bondage," and also, "this card says that death is the principle of nature which sweeps away old life and clears the ground for the growth of the new. . . . The future springs from the rich loam of the past. Nothing

is lost and nothing is wasted; only the form changes." (Alfred Douglas, The Tarot: The Origins, Meaning and Uses of the Cards (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 85), the "chance" placing of the Death card at the end seems almost too fortunate, too appropriate.

[33]Bowering, p. 38.

[34]Eldon Garnet, "Two Bowerings Embrace Past, Present, Future," in Saturday Night 86:49 (November 1971), p. 49.

[35]David Dawson, "Dear Frank/OPEN LETTER," in Open Letter, 1st ser., 3 (April 1966), 30.

[36]Garnet, p. 49.

[37]Garnet, p. 49.

[38]Davey, Tish 1, p. 19.

[39]Olson, p. 338.

[40]Anonymous, Genève (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1971), jacket cover statement.

[41]Bowering, p. 13.

[42]Frank Davey, "A Note on Bowering's Genève," p. 44.

[43]Frank Davey, "George Bowering," in From There to Here (Erin, Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1974), p. 59.

[44]Frank Davey, "A Note on Bowering's Genève," p. 44.

[45]Bowering, p. 1.

[46]Bowering, p. 1.

[47]Bowering, p. 37.

[48]Bowering, p. 9.

[49]Bowering, p. 9.

[50]Bowering, p. 7.

[51]Bowering, p. 2.

[52]Bowering, p. 6.

[53]Bowering, p. 18.

[54]Bowering, p. 21.

[55]Bowering, p. 31.

[56]Bowering, p. 33.

[57]Bowering, p. 12.

[58]Bowering, p. 23.

[59]Bowering, p. 14.

[60]Bowering, p. 14.

[61]Bowering, p. 16.

[62]Bowering, p. 21.

[63]Bowering, p. 22.

[64]Bowering, p. 23.

[65]Bowering, p. 23.

[66]Bowering, p. 23.

[67]Bowering, p. 30.

[68]Bowering, p. 31.

[69]Bowering, p. 31.

[70]Bowering, p. 33.

[71]Bowering, p. 33.

[72]Bowering, p. 35.

[73]Bowering, p. 37.

[74]Yvor Winters, In Defense of Reason (Denver: Allan Swallow, n.d.), p. 20.

[75]Winters, p. 22.

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